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WebDesigner

ISSUE 86

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- Dreamweaver MX 2004 revealed
- 16 pages of advanced step-by-step
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Discover how to pick the perfect palette with our guide to effective colour usage

PHOTOSHOP

BETTER GRAPHICS

Create stunning artwork with Photoshop's layers – experts show you how on page 34

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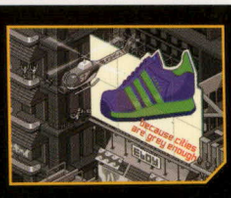

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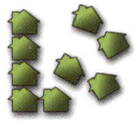

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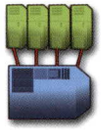

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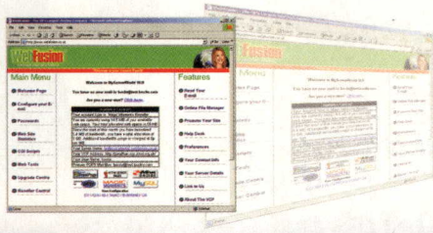

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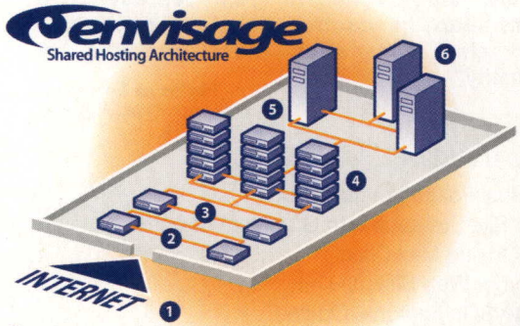

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ISSN 1741-9131

PPA ABC AUDIT BUREAU OF CIRCULATIONS
13,265 July-December 2002

WELCOME

IN WITH THE NEW...

Welcome to *Practical Internet Web Designer*, the biggest and best monthly magazine dedicated to showcasing the latest Web design technologies and techniques.

Regular *PI* readers might have found it difficult to pinpoint their favourite tome on the newsagents' shelves this month, and that's because we've given the magazine a new look, a new focus and even a new name! Don't worry, though, for the old *Practical Internet* values of explaining complicated topics in jargon-free terms and bringing you the latest news and reviews impartially remain – but we've taken this opportunity to update the core aims of our title.

So what's it all about then? Well, *Practical Internet Web Designer* is a new concept – every month we focus on the three big programs that you'll find on virtually every Web designer's Start menu (or Finder – we've gone Mac-friendly as well): Dreamweaver, Photoshop and Flash. You'll find a wealth of in-depth tutorials written by industry experts, designed to bolster your Web skills, allowing you to create real-world improvements to your site along the way.

That's just the start of the story though, and each issue comes with a myriad of other features, tutorials and articles. Our aim is to offer practical advice to everyone – no matter what their expertise. So join us on this new venture, and prepare to build sites you never dreamt of before!

Thomas Watson, Editor
thomas@paragon.co.uk

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SEE PAGE 30 FOR MORE DETAILS

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THE PRACTICAL INTERNET WEB DESIGNER PROMISE

Design focus
Practical Internet Web Designer is the only monthly UK magazine devoted solely to helping you improve your site-building skills. Every month, we focus on the key programs that Web designers of all experience and expertise use: Dreamweaver, Photoshop and Flash. Unlike other titles, we don't shy away from developer issues either, with a section dedicated to hand coding.

Expert help
Each issue of *Practical Internet Web Designer* comes packed with detailed tutorials and indispensable tips and tricks. A dedicated helpdesk section features a team of hand-picked experts to answer your Web design queries. What's more, every article in the magazine is written by an expert in the relevant field.

Practical advice
We are committed to bringing you results, so any tutorial you follow will yield impressive returns that you can use on your own site. To make things easier, the cover disc contains files for you to get started on every tutorial within the magazine.

COVER ART: SIMON DANAHER

This month's cover illustration was created by Simon Danaher. We set him the task of creating a 3D image that conveyed the Web design of the future. Simon went for a huge *BladeRunner*-esque cityscape, which shows the construction of an electronic billboard.

YOUR GUIDE TO THIS ISSUE...

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SEE PAGE 140 FOR FULL DETAILS

FEATURE

CREATE AMAZING WEB SITES

Dreamweaver MX 2004 unveiled

- Discover what this major new release can do for your Web site
- We take an in-depth look at all the back-end coding features that will revolutionise the way you design for the Web
- Tricks to help you get more from the package before anyone else

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FEATURE

PERFECT COLOUR

- Learn the colour tricks the professionals use
- Colour theory: what works and what doesn't
- Get the inside story on the best Web-safe palettes

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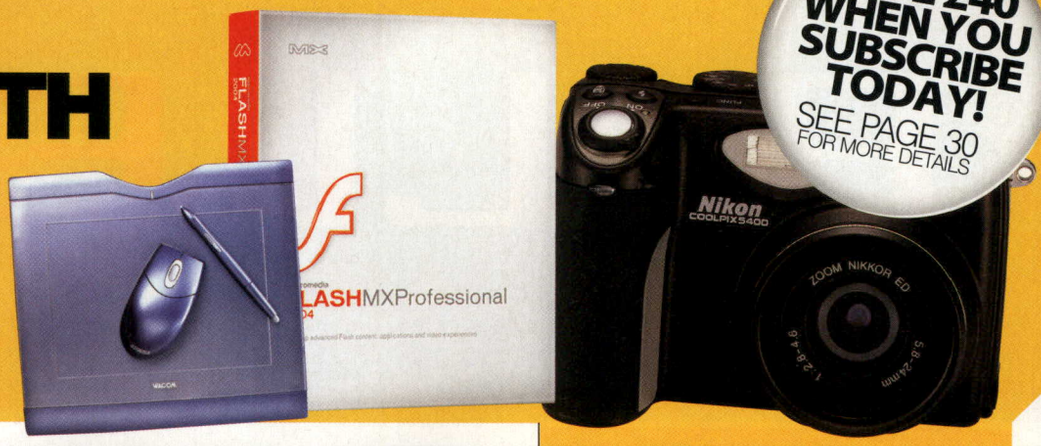

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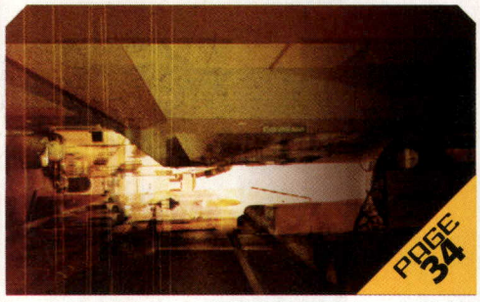

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CREATE AMAZING FLASH GAMES

Create fully-functional retro games for your site

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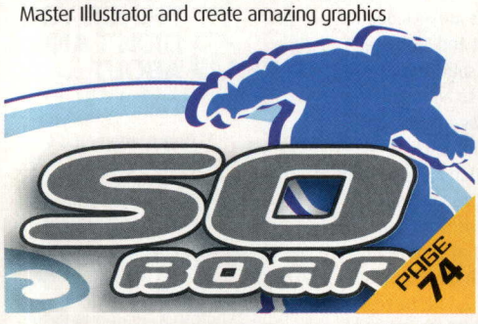
AMAZING LOGOS IN ILLUSTRATOR

Master Illustrator and create amazing graphics



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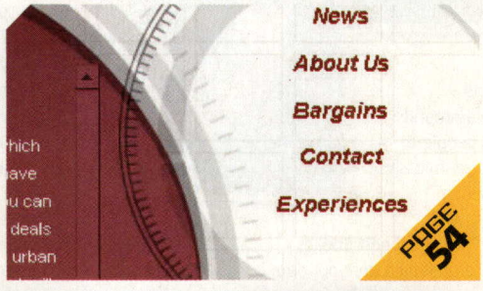
BETTER SITES IN DREAMWEAVER

Get to know the advanced features in Dreamweaver



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TECH SUPPORT

Solve your design problems in our six pages of in-depth questions and answers brought to you by leading experts in Flash, Dreamweaver, Photoshop and Web development

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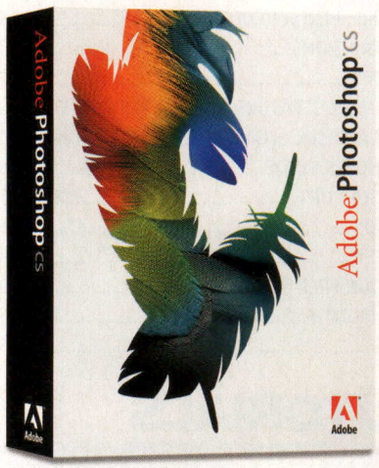
BULLETIN

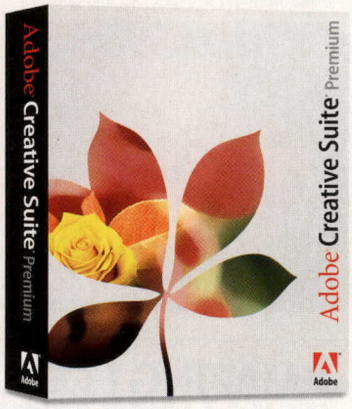
YOUR ESSENTIAL ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST EVENTS IN THE WORLD OF WEB DESIGN, GRAPHICS CREATION AND SITE DEVELOPMENT

NEW SOFTWARE

ADOBE UPS THE STAKES

Bumper package combines the most comprehensive print and Web publishing software within a single box...





■ The eagerly awaited Adobe Photoshop CS has arrived, and certainly does not disappoint with its range of key titles, additional support and time-saving features

Adobe has unveiled a new collection of software tools that looks set to revolutionise the Web design industry.

Hot on the heels of Macromedia's updated Studio MX 2004 suite, Creative Suite package bundles together new versions of Photoshop, GoLive! and more for the first time.

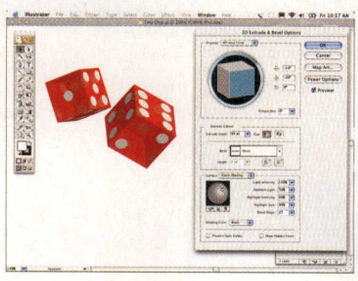
Anyone purchasing the Standard Edition can expect full versions of Photoshop, ImageReady, Illustrator and InDesign, while the Premium version adds GoLive and Acrobat 6.0 Professional.

Rumours of an update to Photoshop had been circulating for months, but Adobe managed to surprise everyone by revealing new versions of most of its big apps. One of the key areas users can look forward to is the added time-saving features that an integrated suite such as this offers. All the component programs share a unified interface that yields common and consistent commands. This allows people of all levels to seamlessly switch between applications, while Native File Format support implies maximum compatibility for your data.

Welcome news for Web authors is the promise of the enhanced output for HTML and ImageReady's inclusion of a Web Content palette. Similarly, images can be exported in batch, while page layouts created with InDesign can be quickly transformed into Smart Objects and XML content.

Workflow issues have also been boosted by an intuitive new Version Cue file manager, which lets you track files throughout the suite by maintaining functionality within the design environment, providing thumbnails of recent saves. A bundle of professional quality templates and over 100 OpenType fonts are included for print and Web use. The suite also enables you to automate tasks between packages with macros in JavaScript, AppleScript and Visual Basic.

Prices for the suite start at £1,215 for the Standard version, with the Premium equivalent available for £2,114. Buyers will automatically gain access to Adobe's brand new online studio that allows developers the chance to find expert tips, tricks and guidance. ■



DID YOU KNOW?

5 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT... ADOBE

1. One of the world's biggest software producers, Adobe generates annual revenues of over $1 billion (£600 million).
2. Adobe was founded in 1982. Illustrator first appeared in 1987, but Photoshop wasn't launched until three years later.
3. Adobe now employs over 3,000 people in locations including the UK, Canada, Brazil, Germany, Japan and Australia.
4. The launch of Creative Suite may be big news here, but it's not in Italy. The suite has been available there since last year.
5. With the Adobe/Aldus merger in 1994, Adobe acquired the rights to the TIFF image format used in publishing.

GOT A NEWS STORY?

Then contact the *Practical Internet Web Designer* team by:

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Practical Internet Web Designer, Highbury - Paragon, Paragon House, St Peters Road, Bournemouth, BH1 2JS

NEWS SHORT

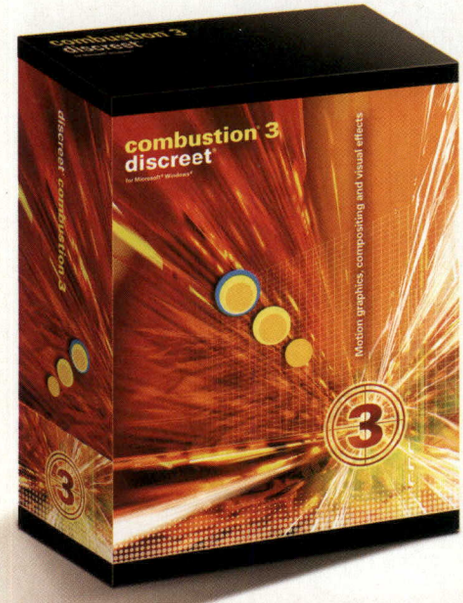
SQUELCHING THE RUMOURS

IBM's new WebFountain technology looks set to enable Web-savvy companies to find things that even Google can't turn up. In production for three years at the Almaden Research Centre, the 'data mining and discovery' tool claims to be more powerful than current engines. It deciphers Web-based text and utilises technology to compile analysis and statistics. The service, ranging from £90,000-£180,000 a year, will let companies check chat rooms/message boards for what others say about them. "It'll enable subscribers to monitor public opinion and squelch rumours," says Susan Feldman of International Data Corps. ■

NEW SOFTWARE

COMBUSTION 3

Award-winning graphics package for new and old media returns with a feature-packed third instalment



Discreet has unveiled a new version of its popular Combustion software.

Version three, available for both PC and Mac, builds on Discreet's reputation for stunning 3D and visual effects with powerful features for work in Web content, DVD production, motion pictures and HDTV.

"Combustion was the first desktop software that put powerful, resolution-independent, vector paint, animation and compositing solutions in the hands of graphic designers, animators, visual effects artists and videographers working on PCs or Macs – and version 3 pushes the boundaries even further," explained Discreet's General Manager, Paul Lypaczewski.

Users can look forward to enhancements in flexibility and productivity via the inclusion of customisable brushes, saveable presets, timeline markers and digital video connectivity. Discreet's well-known interface is also joined by an integrated Editing Operator which enables non-linear actions to be performed directly.

Additionally, JavaScript macros alleviate the artist's workload, while a Flash Output lets you export animations. The software also continues to carry advanced support for a range of plug-ins including Adobe's After Effects and Photoshop.

Combustion 3 is available for Windows XP and 2000 platforms this autumn, with support for Mac OS X following early next year. Full-version copies should retail at around £850, while upgrades from both 2 and 2.1 are priced at around £152. ■

GOOGLE PROGRAMMING AWARDS

Google coding comp

Search engine giant stages programming tournament to identify top development talent

Renowned as one of Silicon Valley's most aggressive recruiters, Google has teamed up with TopCoder to organise an Internet-based development competition.

Google Code Jam 2003 is essentially a round-robin event that tests candidates' programming skills under timed conditions. Running until 14 November and held at Google's headquarters in California, the tournament features 500 voluntary entrants battling it out over three stages. Each participant is invited to use their own choice of language including Java and VB.NET, with the promise of a possible contract and $25,000 (£15,000) worth of prizes offered for their efforts. Billed by the organisers as an "opportunity to display the grace of the true professional in a reward-rich environment," and as "tough problems, intense competition, no pressure" by the official site, it follows more open-ended events staged previously.

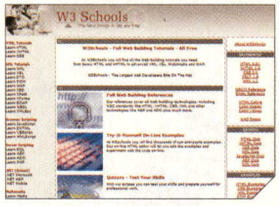
Google awarded $10,000 (£6,000) to the author of a system enabling searchers to locate pages within a geographical area after opening its Googleplex doors in 2002. Similarly, the firm has been known to hold quizzes asking the public to use their search engine to retrieve answers.

"These contests are a great way for Google to show our support and celebrate achievements in the engineering, programming and computer science communities," beamed an enthusiastic spokesman. ■

Google™ Code Jam 2003

RESOURCES

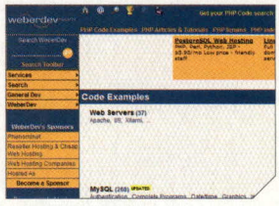
Where to find the best Web design help and advice online



W3 SCHOOLS

www.w3schools.com

This highly professional-looking site claims to be one of the largest developer resources on the Web, and is built on the philosophy of free advice. Full expert tutorials are all quickly accessible from the tidy home page, and range from beginner HTML guides to XML and WAP.



WEBERDEV

www.weberdev.com

Firmly concentrating on the coding and technical development side of the Web, this site not only features advice but code samples too. A wide range of languages including SQL, JavaScript and PHP are covered, while general issues like Web safe colours also receive welcome attention.

PEGAWEB

www.pegaweb.com

Pegaweb is a great-looking domain that boasts a large collection of both Web design and Photoshop tutorials. Written by a design professional, the content is regularly updated and discusses topics such as setting up your first site as well as giving hints on how to use the many downloadable templates.

WEB DESIGNERS PARADISE

www.desktoppublishing.com/webparadise.html

Although it's not visually stunning, this site has so much valuable content that it's well worth checking out. It has sections on scripting, forms, graphics and style sheets, while a mountain of valuable links suggest similar online resources.

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WWW.SURFNEARN.NET

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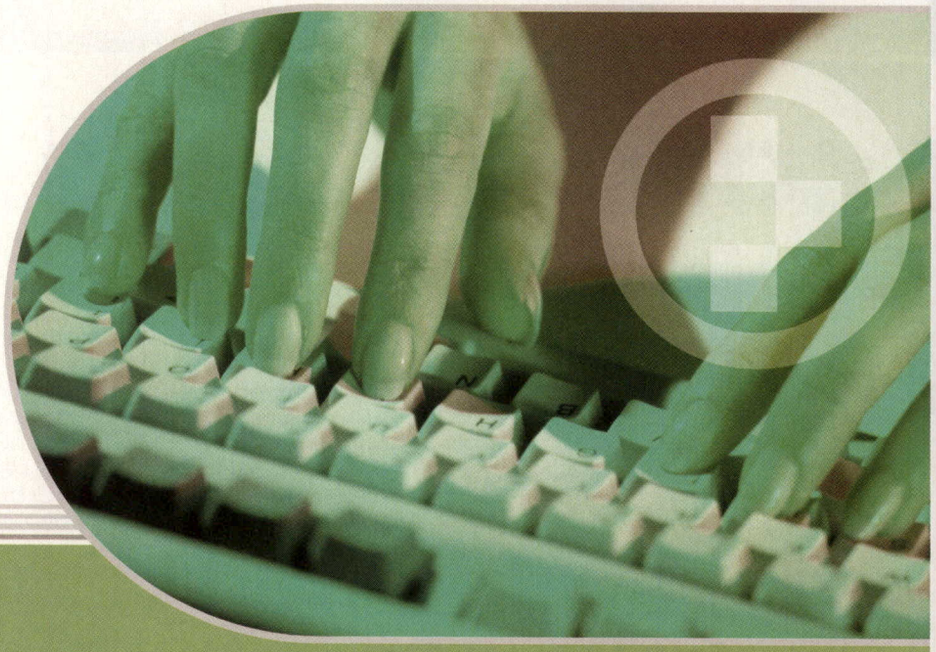

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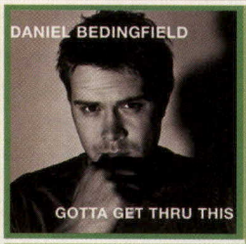

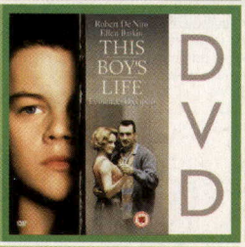

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NEWS SHORT

SITE-BUILDING WITH BT

BT is to include a platform from a leading provider of hosting and Web services in its Internet Pack for small businesses. Interland's Site Builder is a creation tool enabling users to design high quality sites. Mostly HTML-free, the software offers 200 flexible design templates, as well as layouts, schemes and Flash animations. Over four million sites have been built using the product, and it holds endorsements from the likes of Terra Lycos, Verizon and Monster Worldwide.

"BT selected Interland's Site Builder because of its customisation and integration capabilities, and its scaleability," said BT's Neville Manuel. ■

Mini browsers get Flash

Industry leaders shake hands on agreement that could revolutionise embedded browsing

Macromedia recently announced a partnership with one of the world's largest providers of embedded browsers, Espial.

The plan is to integrate Flash support into the Espial Escape browser, currently utilised in interactive TV, wireless, PDA and automotive device categories. This will mean that Espial's consumer products will offer total compatibility with Flash content and applications.

"By working with companies like Espial, we are extending our leading rich client technology to even more consumers, and Espial can leverage our large developer base to create content for its users," enthused Macromedia's Vice President, Peter Meechan.

Both companies believe the move marks the provision of a seamless browsing experience that previous embedded platforms failed to provide, citing particularly TV remote control navigation. "Just as Macromedia Flash took Web content to a new level, the implementation of Flash on the Escape browser will improve the look, feel and ease of use of devices powered by Espial technology," said Espial's Vice President of Global Marketing, Bob Egner.

Meanwhile, a selection of useful extensions has already been made available to Flash MX 2004 users. Vendors including Red Giant, GlobFX, Electric Rain and HiSoftware are behind the powerful widgets that build on the package's architecture. "These extensions offer exciting new capabilities for creating rich media presentations and applications using our new Flash MX 2004 product line," explains Norm Meyrowitz, Macromedia's President of Products.

New timeline effects, behaviours and tools can be added, and the extensions can be purchased from Macromedia's online store. ■

macromedia®

NEW ONLINE RELEASE

Multimedia Monty

Full Monty writer makes history by launching new film project online

The September premier of a low-budget British feature film was staged not only at the cinema, but simultaneously on the Web.

This Is Not a Love Song is the latest production from Full Monty creator Simon Beaufoy and was filmed in little over two weeks. Described as a gritty thriller, the film follows two characters named Spike and Heaton on the run after an unexpected crime, and was directed by Bille Eltringham using digital video stock.

Featuring a cast best known for appearances in TV's *Our Friends in the North, Early Doors* and even the Harry Potter movies, the release could be a pioneering step towards online distribution. "We are keen to use it as a test bed, now that the technology is there," explained the UK film council, who funded the project for a mere £500,000.

"The simultaneous online/theatrical release has shown that there is a sizeable audience ready, willing and hungry for feature films to be delivered online," added the production team. "As part of that potential audience, we look forward to the next online feature release."

Visitors to the official site are able to register to view the whole feature for up to £3 and download or stream the film for a limited period of time. You can also find further information about the film's synopsis, trailers and a comprehensive list of all those involved at **www.thisisnotalovesong.com.** ■

EVENTS DIARY

Pop!Tech 2003,
16-19 October, Maine USA
Lawrence Lessig guests on the "Creation of entirely new art and entertainment forms"

Enterprise Information Architecture,
20 October, San Francisco
A talk on providing rational, user-centred content

3rd IEEE Conference on Standardisation and innovation in Information Technology,
22 October,
Delft, The Netherlands
W3C to voice concerns over the "Problems of standards implementation"

Introduction to the Semantic Web,
22 October, Madrid
Ivan Herman presents this speech at the Polytechnic University

Cooper U/FTP Interaction Design Seminar,
23-24 October, Seattle
Alan Cooper offers "Specific goal-directed design techniques"

AIGA National Design Conference,
23-26 October, Vancouver
A focus on extraordinary design in the 21st Century

Cal-IT Europe 2003,
27-28 October, London
An introduction to various Californian-based Web speakers including those from Netscape

New Media Age,
30 October,
Winchester, Hampshire
Wired Wessex event discussing emerging trends in the new media industry

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NEWS SHORT

FORMATTING BATTLE

Autodesk, a leading light in architectural software, is behind a campaign persuading users to adopt a different Web file format.

It hopes to draw the market away from Adobe's industry standard PDF in favour of its own Design Web Format (DWF). Macromedia has also entered the fray with FlashPaper, based on an animation format that incorporates documents into Web pages for printing. But Autodesk is the strongest threat so far, commissioning an advertising campaign highlighting the inadequacies of Adobe's format. It's even found a voice in celebrated Internet design writer Jacob Nielsen, who recently branded PDF as "unfit for human consumption". ■

NEWS SHORT

COLLABORATION OF THE GIANTS

Bill Gates and IBM's Steve Mills have unveiled a three-year collaboration during a meeting in Manhattan. The project centres on the development of tools enabling cross-platform computers to conduct secure transactions over the Web. This includes Windows, Big Blue's WebSphere and even Linux OS, which Gates watched demonstrating the work during the meeting. Gates commented: "This is a fabric for someone to do eCommerce that's independent of the Operating Systems out there."

Mills added that the rivals have come together for the good of technology, despite it opening doors for other vendors. ■

ACCESSIBILITY

ACCESSIBILITY AWARENESS

Internet 'godfather' speaks out on disability while the RNIB continues to spread the accessibility message

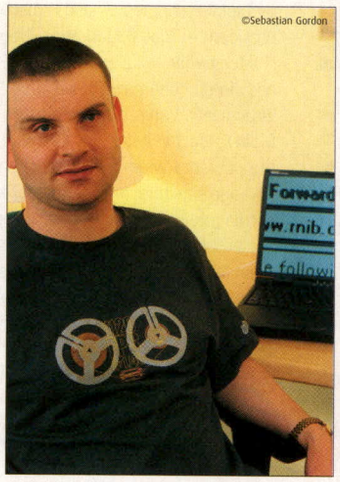
The past month has seen a glut of conferences and campaigns that have helped to raise the profile of disabled Web access.

Tim Berners-Lee, the man widely regarded as the Internet's inventor, was among the speakers at a recent conference held in London's Guildhall. Jointly hosted by the Worshipful Company of Information Technologists and the Lord Mayor, 'IT – The Universal Enabler' aimed to highlight the role innovation can play in improving the lives of the disabled. The event also hoped to make employers realise that technology can help them maintain skills and working practices, should staff suffer a loss of faculty.

"The potential for using technology to support people with even severe disabilities is well proven," said a spokesman for the organisers.

At the same time, the Royal National Institute for the Blind is running its own accessibility initiatives. With support from insurers Standard Life, the charity has launched a new online resource along with hosting a string of seminars until November. The aim is to offer Web designers advice and training that should not only make their sites more accessible to the disabled, but more effective for everyone. In-house research has revealed that Internet use among those with sight deficiency is above the national average, and that over 10 percent of the population suffer disability.

"With the fierce competition the Internet offers, usability and the online customer experience will become an important differentiating factor," commented Standard Life's Sales and eCommerce Director, Margaret McPhail. ■



■ Research has revealed that Internet use among people with sight problems is above the national average

WEB SITE RENOVATION

Dabs relaunched

Technology retailer bids for success with new .com storefront

One of the Internet's premier online vendors of technological goods has relaunched its shopping facilities.

Bolton-based Dabs.com is regarded as one of the UK's genuine Web successes. It has become the leader of its sector in the last three years, having gained recognition at 2002's Information Management Awards and this year's Sunday Times Business Awards. The company has now invested heavily in a new site.

Costing three quarters of a million pounds, it represents a huge undertaking that has seen the previous domain's code completely rewritten. "As such, in terms of investment of both cash and resources, the new Dabs.com Web site represents one of our largest ever projects," explained Marketing Manager Jonathan Wall.

Dabs enlisted Manchester-based Zendor Interactive to assist in usability issues, but the bulk of development was carried out in-house: "Zendor is well experienced in Web site usability and we were most impressed with their approach," remarked Wall.

The move coincides with the retailer's plans to meet ambitious targets and draw in new customers. It was thought the technical bias of the old site alienated customers, and the new design improves usability and convenience. "Tests show the new site has addressed the weaknesses," says Wall. "We're delighted with the results." ■

■ At a cost of around three quarters of a million pounds, the new Dabs site is a major investment

PRODUCTS

New hardware and software to boost your design creativity

RICOH CAPLIO 300G

www.ricoh.com

This new digital camera features a sturdy body and robust design, as well all-weather performance and lengthy battery life. Suitable for underwater photography, it has many of the advanced features of its predecessor, the RR30. Available to the European market from this month, it arrives with a cost of £349.99 including VAT.

EPSON STYLUS PHOTO 935

www.epson.com

Not only does this new printer from Epson produce staggering results at 5760dpi resolutions, it can also grab image data from your digital camera's memory card directly or from a USB drive. It includes its own LCD screen and retails at £229.

SONY GIGAVAULT

www.sony.com

Available with either a USB 2.0 or iLink interface, this 80Gb external storage device can easily fit comfortably into your pocket. Boasting full plug and play support, the unit features a built-in rechargeable battery with a life of up to five hours and is expected to sell for £277.

APPLE POWER MAC G5

www.apple.com

With a 64-bit dual 2GHz processor on board, this powerhouse Mac is a graphics guru's dream, and promises to zip around even the largest of files with aplomb. Better start saving, though, as the entry model costs a cool £1,203.

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SILVER	Yes	100	1	5	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	0	0	0	£8.95
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GOLD PLUS	Yes	200	6	30	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	1	2	0	£19.95
PLATINUM	Yes	500	10	50	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	2	2	1	£49.95
PLATINUM PLUS	Yes	500	15	100	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	2	2	1	£89.95

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eBoy

With a distinctive and stunning style, eBoy is currently the hottest site on the Web. We spoke to eBoy to find out more about the German crew's much-imitated pixel art

PIWD: How did eBoy come about? When did the first piece of pixel art come out of the eBoy collective?
EBOY: We all had been pushing some pixels before the birth of eBoy. So it was there right from the beginning. Our own Web site might be the first real eBoy project. After that, *IMS 100*, a Japanese book about Web design, was the first to publish our work. Things evolved from there...

PIWD: Where did the name eBoy come from?
EBOY: Email. We love the Beastie Boys, Sony, Apple, Toy, Yahoo!, Pop... we thought of something short and pop...

PIWD: You mention on your site that you only ever use Photoshop. What is the thinking behind concentrating solely on this application?
EBOY: It's just the main tool for pushing pixels – but we've had some affairs with Fontlab, Maya and some other girls...

PIWD: Talk us through the actual process of creating a piece of pixel-based art
EBOY: It's a rotation principle: one starts then another works further and gives the picture to the next and so on. The more boys we get involved the better.

PIWD: How much creative freedom do you have when you're given a brief?
EBOY: It depends entirely on the client...

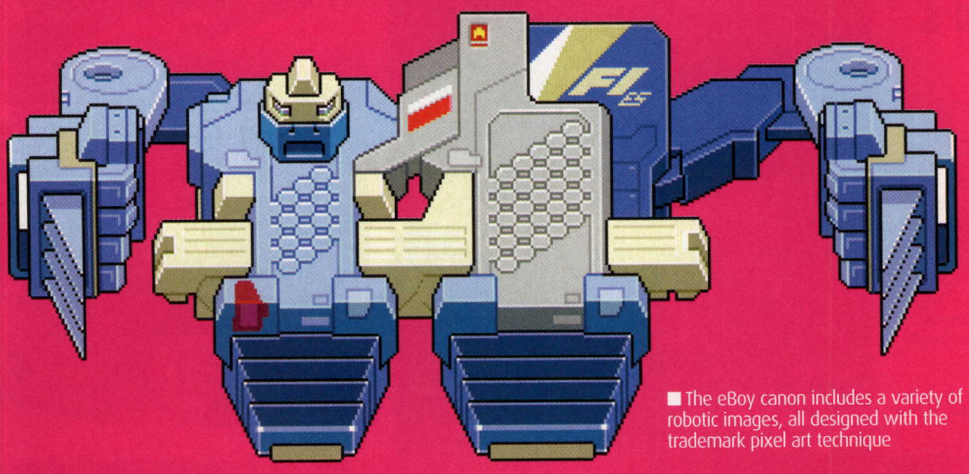
PIWD: You must find yourselves in huge demand. Which of your talents are your clients calling on most at the moment? Why do you think this is the case?
EBOY: Making pictures with cityscapes... because humans like maps.

PIWD: Does annoy you that your style is imitated so much?
EBOY: Hey, we're proud of it!

PIWD: What project are you most proud of and why?
EBOY: Our kids

■ Huge cityscapes like this are mainly what made eBoy famous, and it's easy to see why

■ The attention to detail in massive images like this can be explained by its 'pixel art' status



■ The eBoy canon includes a variety of robotic images, all designed with the trademark pixel art technique

PIWD: Fair enough, but can you tell us which image or Web site has given the eBoy team the biggest headaches or the most satisfaction?
EBOY: Maybe the book. It's very heavy. It has 512 pages. And it comes with rounded corners. We worked on it for about a year and a half and it shows the status of our complete database.

PIWD: Describe eBoy in five words
EBOY: Kids, PlayStation, shopping, TV, sleeping.

PIWD: Your work mixes child-like robots and monsters with some pretty adult themes. Where do you get the inspiration for your images and concepts?
EBOY: Reality, shopping, war, cartoons, kids, music, girls, food, code, gardening, quilting, quake, sneakers, OS X, technology, etc.

PIWD: Gardening and quilting?
EBOY: Quilting is a technique in some aspects similar to pixeling. Often quilters use patches and arrange them to create pictures or patterns. We have seen some incredibly powerful quilts crafted without any designers' attitude (of course there's a lot of crap, too). It's a traditional technique having similarities to the new technique of pushing pixels. We find this quite exciting.
A garden can just be very beautiful and relaxing.

PIWD: What are the major differences between the way you approach Web design and creating pixel art?
EBOY: Pixel art often doesn't need to fulfil specific needs as a Web site does. Navigation/orientation and technical issues give Web sites a different spin.

PIWD: eCity rightly attracts a lot of attention. How much time do the team at eBoy spend on this daily, and what are your aims for the development of eCity?
EBOY: It's possible that we work about four weeks on a single image. The big project is filling our eCity database with more and more objects we can recycle and modify. The bigger the database the bigger our power to create new high quality stuff.

PIWD: What are eBoy's plans for the future? Do you intend to put your immense talents to use in things like Flash animation, or are you happy to stay flat?
EBOY: We've started making pictures with 3D but it's still an experiment – Flash is nice but there are so many other sexy technologies... and pixels is very time-consuming...

PIWD: What do you hope the future holds for eBoy?
EBOY: Happiness.
<END>

You can find out more on eBoy at the German design team's site on **www.eboy.com**. Point your browser to **(www.eboy.com/pages/works/ecity/index.html)** to see the immense eCity in all its glory. ■

BEHIND THE SCENES: LEVI'S EUROPE.COM

THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS PURVEYORS OF DENIM HAS BEEN FASHION ICONS FOR AS LONG AS MOST OF US CAN REMEMBER. **MARK BILLEN** CHECKS OUT HOW THE COMPANY'S EUROPEAN SITE HAS FOUND ITSELF AT THE CUTTING EDGE OF THE WEB

When Loeb 'Levi' Strauss founded his dry goods business in 1850's San Francisco, he probably had no clue of his lasting legacy. Heralded as the inventor of America's most successful and iconic garment, his blue jeans have continued to evolve. Still very much based on the irrepressible style of the original 501, the range has encompassed every cultural trend from the Fifties to the present day. The Woodstock generation were treated to Levi's flares, while appearances on album covers like *Sticky Fingers* and *Born in The USA* elevated the brand's pop appeal through the Seventies and Eighties. However, in more recent times the company has become as famous for its promotional campaigns as its clothes. Most UK audiences will doubtless remember the notorious 'Launderette' 501 commercial, while subsequent TV campaigns like Sta-Prest's 'Flat Eric' have proven influential.

So with high street and old media marketing sewn-up, as it were, a recent focus has been establishing an online presence. We managed to catch up with three of Levi's Europe.com's key figures to find out what work went into producing the dynamic and vibrant site.

GOOD LOOK, GOOD STYLE

Active since 1995, Levi's Europe.com has spearheaded the brand's initiative to target a young, Internet-savvy demographic. Relaunched at the start of this year, the site maintains corporate identity with eye-catching artwork and stylish photography. "We wanted to dial up the emotional part of the site experience, make the site more playful, interactive and visually strong," explains Helen Venge, Digital Marketing Manager of Levi's Europe. "Also, we wanted it to be more appealing to girls, and a site that was innovative and unique to Levi's."

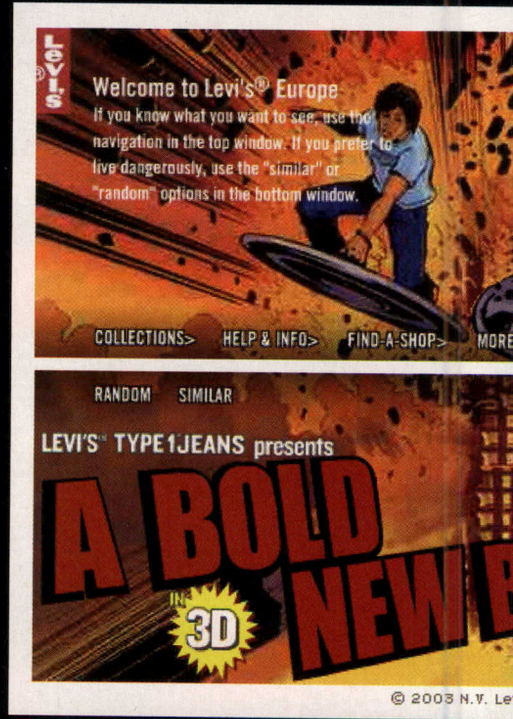
Indeed, visitors are treated to an experience that not only showcases new products but enables them to tap into a Levi's culture. Unsurprisingly this ability to maintain its finger on the cool pulse is no coincidence, and the company conducted a significant amount of research prior to launch. Working with a firm specialising in online studies, they were able to define what users' expectations of the site would be. Similarly, initiatives remain in place for gauging public reactions: "We run an ongoing survey to continuously gather information from our users on what they like about the site and what they would like to see improved. This is very valuable feedback," Venge says. "In addition, we carry out qualitative focus groups regularly to go into a bit more depth with specific topics."

This has allowed the site to evolve. In the fickle world of fashion, the content must keep up with fleeting trends, not just from the customer but the industry as well. Simon Crab, the Creative Director at Lateral Net Ltd, commissioned for the project, insists that the constant updating of imagery, games and music required a suitable design. "The original specification was to design a site structure that can constantly evolve and be flexible enough to include a wide range of content and formats."

LATERAL THINKING

Levi's chose design house Lateral Net to undertake every aspect of the site's development process and subsequent maintenance. "We want best-of-breed solutions and we believe this can be achieved by working with best-of-breed partners who are specialists in their field," Venge explains. However, a degree of flexibility and accessibility was achieved between the parties by utilising content-management solutions. Teaming up with Neoworks, Lateral developed a system that enables in-house marketing teams to regularly upload fresh content.

Spanning a period of just eight weeks and requiring the talents of an eleven-strong production team, the site officially went live in March. In order to meet such a stringent



DESIGNER FACTS

NAME: Lateral Net Ltd
OCCUPATION: New Media Design Consultancy
SITES WORKED ON: Levi's Europe, Faber & Faber, Nintendo UK

Specialising in the conceiving, designing and building Web sites for a mass-market audience, Lateral Net has been in business since 1997. Since then it has attracted a number of high profile clients and gained a reputation for excellence in strategy, design, creativity and technology. Its success has been born out of a philosophy of truly understanding what the customer wants, which has been the cornerstone of Lateral's award-winning recognition. With a portfolio that not only features Levi's Europe and US, the small team of around 30 skilled staff can boast collaborations with Sega Europe, Boddingtons, Pathe Films and The National Gallery, to name a few. But their expertise doesn't only reside in the Web. They also find time for projects in mobile phone technology, interactive digital TV, DVD production and high-end systems development.

"WE WANTED IT TO BE MORE APPEALING TO GIRLS AS WELL AS BEING A SITE THAT WAS INNOVATIVE AND UNIQUE TO LEVI'S"

timeframe for such a complex project, Lateral adopted certain working techniques. "We borrowed elements from various rapid development methods, and shortened the design-approval-development-test-deploy cycle as much as possible," admits Producer Daniel Bambach.

Designers, developers, copywriters and those from neighbouring projects were also invited to attend regular brainstorming sessions. "All production work is run through the trafficking system Lateral employs to make sure the best person for a particular job is available when needed," reveals Bambach. "A large proportion of the team at Lateral make regular contributions to the site, with several key figures leading the design style and technical direction".

As far as technical tools were concerned, the policy was to use solutions that could deliver in time. Collaborative software including CVS and Bugzilla were accompanied by in-house packages, while Illustrator, Photoshop and Flash MX featured among mainstay packages. "Flash MX was chosen as the overall technology as it allowed the correct mix of stability and flexibility in terms of animation and manipulating content," explains Crab. In this respect Lateral looked to introduce new creative ideas by pushing chosen environments to their limits. "New design techniques are there for the inventing on all platforms and with all media, and these spring from the ideas we have and what we want to achieve online," says Bambach.

Many of the difficulties Lateral faced during production were attributed to the technologies used. Integrating a Flash-built site with a Java-

KEY FEATURE

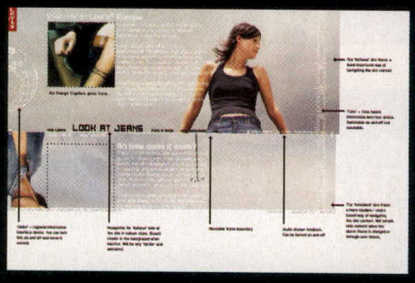
One of the nicest aspects of the site, which the design team touched on and will look to add to in the future, is the collection of 'hidden' elements. The clever use of randomly generated content often throws up quirky little stories or sophisticated imagery, but the addition of mini games adds a dimension of fun. For example, there's a really entertaining time-passer that's ingeniously simple in concept and not too technically challenging. Built with Flash MX, visitors are asked to click a progressively speedy slideshow of logos when they spot the Levi's red tab. What starts off as a simple enough proposition soon becomes extremely taxing as all manner of themed logos from the sublime to the ridiculous pop rapidly onto the screen. Your score is registered by a counter, and although only intended as an amusing filler, it's an example of what can be done to enliven a site.

based Content Management system seemed to cause most of the headaches. "The problem is the communication from Flash to the database and vice versa," explains Crab. "It's achieved by sending and receiving XML from the Flash application – we had a number of problems with bugs in Flash MX and some fine-tuning of the CMS was needed to get the right results." Other worries centred on Flash's ignorance of browser navigation, and the inclusion of a music generator struggled on lower spec machines. "We had to build an agent that checks the processing power and degrades the delivery gracefully, ie instead of getting four channels of audio, you get one channel of pre-mixed audio on slower machines."

Aside from that, a significant issue was that of language. Producing content for users across multiple European cultures naturally raised considerations about font sets, spelling and character or word lengths. "These are not just technical problems but aesthetic issues of tone of voice, humour translation and so on," Simon Crab admits. "However, if these issues are taken into account at the beginning of the project it should not impact too heavily on ongoing development."

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

As far as feedback is concerned, the consensus is that the groundwork in market research has been vindicated. The company's online surveys have suggested a following that ties in nicely with its intended market of 15-24 year olds. "They like the product presentation, the way they can look at highlights of a collection and then click through for detailed information," concurs Venge. "From their comments we understand that it's very much the overall design, interactivity and playfulness combined with the access to useful product information and service features that they appreciate." What's more, the site has also impressed those in the industry, most notably lifting the Bronze Cyber Lion at Cannes and receiving glowing references in the trade press.



The team themselves are also only too happy to highlight those aspects of the site they're most proud of. One in particular that many visitors will be quick to notice concerns the way content is structured and accessed. A historical timeline provides Levi's facts, while a central menu bar flicks between two panes that can display user-selected or random material. "This means the user can chance upon unusual content and unexpected juxtapositions of images, text and sounds, and never see the same thing twice," says Crab. The unique feature also opens up doors for site flexibility. As Daniel Bambach explains: "We are still seeing new ways to use the ideas and designs we had right at the outset of the project."

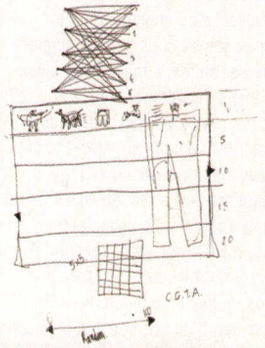
"WE HAD TO BUILD AN AGENT THAT CHECKS THE PROCESSING POWER AND DEGRADES THE DELIVERY GRACEFULLY, IE INSTEAD OF GETTING FOUR CHANNELS OF AUDIO, YOU GET ONE CHANNEL OF PRE-MIXED AUDIO ON SLOWER MACHINES"

So what of the future? The team expects to see the process of evolution continue, not just with the updating of imagery or general content but with further interactive elements. "We'll be adding games, little interactive experiences and stories – most of which you'll have to explore to find," promises Simon. This includes exciting new proposals like the new graffiti toy visitors can use to tag a special zone, and October will herald a section devoted to the classic 501 jean. "The vision we have for eu.levi.com is simple: To be the sole hub for all our communication," says Venge. "This is what it's designed and built to be. It's a long-term platform that will allow us the level of flexibility necessary for the speed with which digital communication develops." ■

IN STAGES

WE TAKE A LOOK AT THE PRODUCTION PROCESS BEHIND ONE OF LEVI'S EUROPE.COM'S KEY FEATURES

1



1. Often the designers will begin by sketching ideas for areas of the site with pen and paper. This doodle from Simon's book shows his early concepts for representing the online catalogues and fitment guides. Notice the pair of jeans on the right, icon bar at the screen top and the dimensional annotations.

2

2. The next stage is producing digital mock-ups for each section. Here a basic concept for the fit guide has been drawn up and placed within the main template. This proposal, complete with galaxy-styled menu, was eventually abandoned after usability tests deemed it unsuitable.

3

3. Finally a design is settled upon, and the developers can render the idea properly before adding functionality. This is the final fit guide found on the site and uses animated menus to tailor garments. Gender, waist size and lower leg style can be set, with the results displayed on the right.

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CREATE AMAZING WEB SITES

WITH THE CURRENT BATCH OF MACROMEDIA TITLES NOW AVAILABLE, WE TAKE OUR FIRST IN-DEPTH LOOK AT THE WORLD'S NUMBER ONE SITE EDITOR...

WORDS: CHRIS SCHMIDT IMAGERY: SIMON DANAHAR

Despite an ever-growing number of applications, there has always been a core group of titles that have become synonymous with their particular media – and what Photoshop is to graphics editing, Dreamweaver has become to Web authoring. It's therefore perhaps something of a surprise that FrontPage is still the biggest-selling application of its kind, but this is due primarily to its integration into the ubiquitous Office suite.

However, ask any professional Web designer worth their salt what their chosen package is and nine times out of ten the response will be 'Dreamweaver'. On such a scale the Macromedia title is by far the most important and influential when it comes to developing cutting-edge Web content, especially when put in context of other complementary titles such as Flash.

The release of the latest MX 2004 versions of Macromedia's popular tools is therefore an occasion that warrants the attention of anyone who takes Web development seriously. And we'll be looking at the new Dreamweaver package over the next five pages, pointing out new features or considering how they've improved over previous versions, and hopefully helping you decide whether to upgrade your existing copy or perhaps switch from a less popular rival.

Whatever way you look at it, when such an important title is upgraded you have to sit up and take notice. There's no denying Dreamweaver has been an integral part of the development of the Internet, and it contains a raft of features that are bound to help things evolve even further.

A CLASSIC EVOLVES

The original version of Dreamweaver emerged in 1997 and was greeted with apprehension from the growing army of Web designers who previously had to painstakingly hand code their pages. This was necessary to ensure consistency of the work when viewed through the mainstream browsers of Netscape and Internet Explorer, which were at the height of their battles at the time.

Even the term 'Web designer' was in its infancy, as those who actually created the pages were generally more familiar with programming than pixel pushing. By the time the 1.2 upgrade was released there was a general murmur going around the purist coding community. But it wasn't until the second generation that the title started to see the old school converting, as the WYSIWYG application began to be acknowledged as producing clean and reliable code – which many previous Web-authoring software attempts had failed to do.

By the time Dreamweaver 3 was announced, the title had taken its crown as the definitive professional Web author, and a noticeable change was now seen in the standard of the average site. More and more authors from design backgrounds discovered how simple the creation of Web pages actually was, and coders suddenly found that their pages needn't look like long lists of text occasionally broken by the odd <HR> tag.

DREAMWEAVER MX 2004

Eight years down the line and Dreamweaver has evolved into a powerful collection of tools for creating and managing Web content that – along with its counterpart MX titles – has become the definitive collection for the discerning professional.

So what's new in the current version? Well, on first glance things look reassuringly familiar, with no major layout revisions as with the previous upgrade, for example. The interface offers its layout and tools in a similar manner to its predecessor, making the transfer to the new title a natural progression and allowing you to discover the inevitable improvements the upgrade brings.

One of the first things to become apparent is the Start screen, which you also find in the other new MX titles. It offers choices for continuing your work session through opening an existing file, creating a new one or using one of various samples to kick-start a new project.

Once into the main interface the familiar panels become apparent, although many have received a makeover, such as the Insert bar which loses the clunky tab approach in preference to a jump-to selection drop-down for the main categories.

Similar changes have been applied to the main editing window and the occasional panel, but generally these are cosmetic and tidy the interface up while still keeping familiar controls within easy reach.

ADDITIONAL FEATURES

Such interface tweaks are further enhanced by features that move the title forward to include and provide support to and from other applications. Naturally, integration with other MX 2004 titles has been further tightened as

HISTORY

IT'S AS EASY AS 1-2-MX 2004

Before Dreamweaver, Web authoring was only really possible through hand coding content line by line. Of course FrontPage was around, but ask any old-school coder about that particular title and they'll still pale at the suggestion.

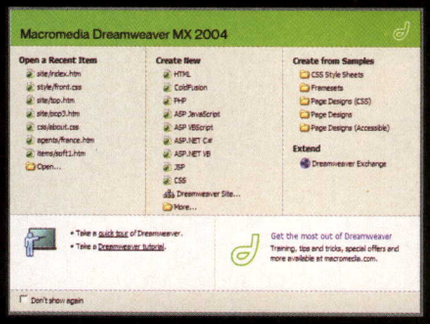
Looking back at previous versions of Dreamweaver, it becomes apparent how basic the earlier versions actually were. When the first version was released in 1997, the initial excitement of working with a WYSIWYG environment that produced clean, efficient code quickly wore off as it became taken for granted. And the floating palettes that cluttered the second and third generations were as much a hindrance as a help.

It wasn't until the integration of Ultradev and the revised interface of the MX version that the title really came into its own, and the new MX 2004 version certainly sees things maturing further, with more comprehensive dynamic content and CSS support. But where MX 2005 will go is anyone's guess...

"WHATEVER WAY YOU LOOK AT IT, WHEN SUCH AN IMPORTANT TITLE IS UPGRADED YOU HAVE TO SIT UP AND TAKE NOTICE. THERE'S NO DENYING DREAMWEAVER HAS BEEN AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERNET..."

TECHNIQUES

DREAMWEAVER MX 2004 TIPS



1: Getting started

By default you'll be presented with the Start screen when Dreamweaver loads or you close any open windows. This provides a useful method of accessing existing work, deciding on the format for new content or making use of pre-built samples which you can develop to better suit your needs.

2: Interface interference

With the increasing importance multiple panels play in the new version with the various CSS controls for example, you might want to consider taking advantage of the ability to move panels around the interface. If your screen resolution allows, we suggest docking your files and assets to the left so they can be constantly referenced.

3: Visual table management

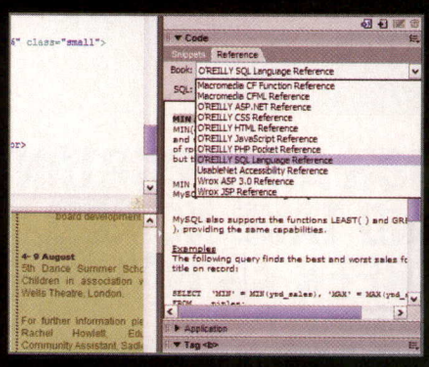
Working and adjusting table cells is made much easier, thanks to the new facility that provides information on column dimensions in both relative percentage and absolute pixel terms, allowing you to see how resizing columns might affect the page structure.

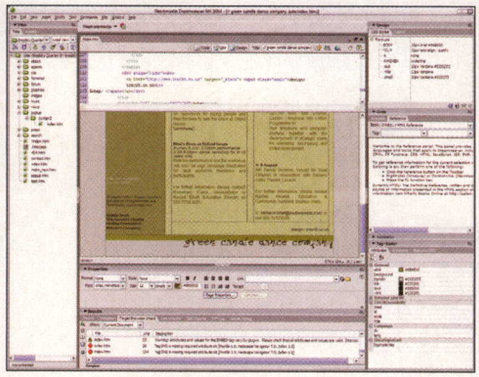
4: CSS Validation

With its improved CSS support, you can see at a glance whether your styles are being overridden by conflicting style data through linked or embedded style sheets. If things aren't appearing quite as you imagined, make this your first port of call and any problem areas will be ruled through in red.

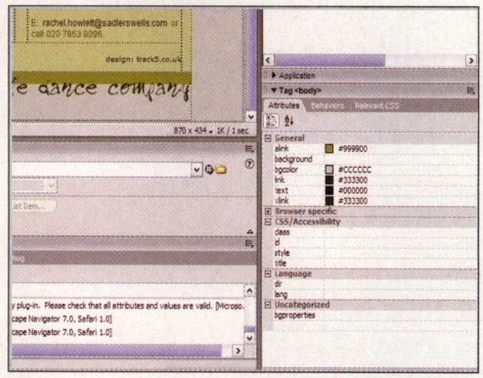
5: A little light reading

With support for so many technologies you can be forgiven for not being the master of them all, but with so many reference titles now available covering everything from HTML to SQL, taking in ASP .NET, PHP and Accessibility along the way, there's no excuse for not getting up to speed.





■ The new interface develops the old without being impossible for users to understand, making migration a natural process



■ The Tag panel provides a new home for the Behaviors tab along with attributes and relevant CSS controls

Macromedia chases the single-application solution. To fully appreciate this you'd need to look further than the Web-authoring tool and into related Studio MX 2004 titles to see how common interface elements found in Flash and Fireworks complement those in Dreamweaver. Together they make a cohesive whole, providing far more versatility than any one title alone.

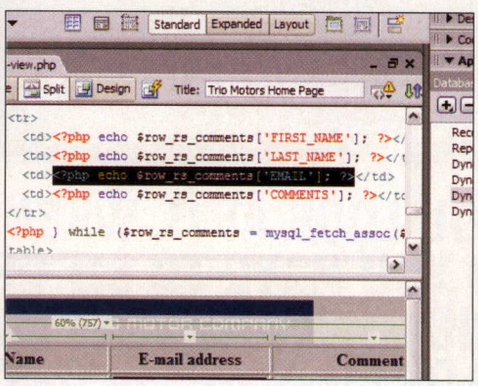
An example of how such complementary technologies are benefiting Dreamweaver can be seen through Flash Elements support where basic Flash native SWF files can be customised like a regular tag. Similarly, basic image-editing features now also come into play. As well as being able to launch and edit work in Fireworks, there is more direct control over image content with the ability to crop, resize and make basic adjustments within Dreamweaver, using an original protected image as a source point.

Making such a distinction between an original image and what's used within a site is an important development with much potential. For example, if you've cropped a region from an original image, you can simply retrace your steps at any point in the future to re-reference the original to create a new crop boundary should you change your mind.

But it's not only images that can be included in your work. Previous versions of Flash saw improved support for cleaning up the mess that is Word HTML, but MX 2004 takes this further with Word and Excel copy and paste options. This allows you to transfer such content from original files directly into Dreamweaver while preserving fonts, colours and associated CSS styles.

DIGGING DEEPER

So far, so good... Interface tweaks and fun features may make for an interesting new-features list, but it is the support for the continued development of standards and technologies that makes Dreamweaver really stand out from the crowd.



■ New PHP server behaviours include Master-Detail Page Set and User Authentication

The previous MX version saw dramatic development as Ultradev was integrated, and regular Dreamweaver users suddenly became aware of how much easier it was to create more dynamic content. Such a change in Web designers' preconceptions of what is possible was on a par with the original Dreamweaver which shattered similar myths about HTML.

And the new version takes this support further, as you might expect, with unique support for ColdFusion development extending MX cross-application possibilities. ASP .NET support hasn't been forgotten, with updated support for ASP .NET 1.1 to include WebForms, custom tag support plus server objects and behaviours. And JSP, PHP, XML and XHTML also find better support, making the development of such assets much more reliable straight from within Dreamweaver.

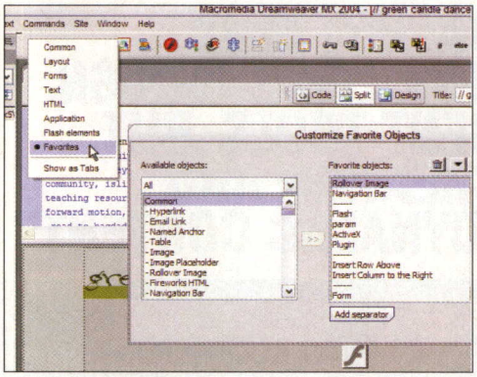
However, the biggest change to the Dreamweaver principle lies with its new found attitude towards Cascading Style Sheets. CSS has long been a distinguishing feature for professionally designed sites, as the concept allows greater control over your site's general appearance from a single source. The Font tag is finally laid to rest with Dreamweaver MX 2004, as CSS support reaches new heights and authors are encouraged to consider new and more reliable methods of formatting their HTML.

The most immediate point of recognition for this change of direction can be found through the familiar Properties panel. No longer is there access to the old-style font attributes. Instead you find similar options for font face and size etc, but any adjustment made here is applied directly to the file's style sheet.

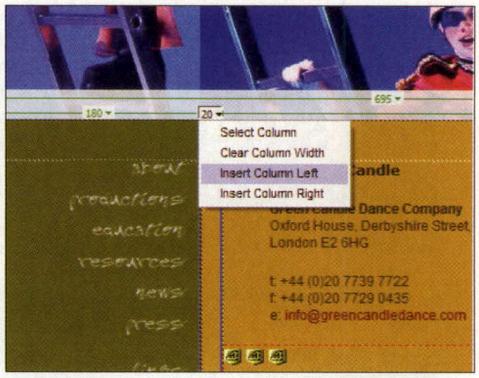
This is an area that will excite or concern existing users the most, as developing CSS content uses very different methods from the previous outdated font approach. And in some ways, the effectiveness of CSS support was an area of some debate in previous versions of Dreamweaver as the feature was arguably hidden away, making amendments to CSS files an unreliable affair due to the sensitive nature in which the CSS hierarchy works.

With increased emphasis on technology, Dreamweaver MX 2004 sees some interesting developments with CSS, including the new Rule Inspector which provides more accessible control over your site's formatting from a central point, along with the ability to detect whether any of your attributes may be overridden by conflicting CSS files, for example.

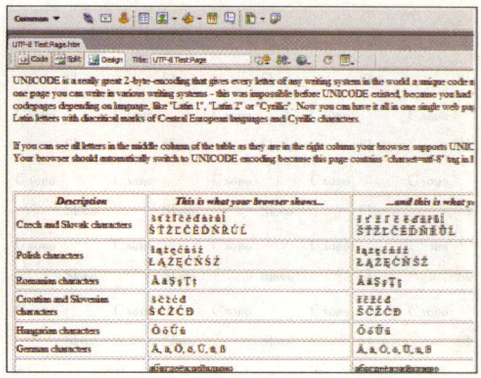
Other familiar features have also been revised to incorporate the new direction, with CSS code hints speeding up hand coding, page properties allowing the



■ The Insert panel now take less space, and includes the option to add your most frequently used functions into a Favorites option



■ Clearer info is available when working with table content, so layouts are easier to plan without turning to the Properties panel



■ Full Unicode support allows any font and encoding to be rendered accurately, regardless of the user's Operating System

establishment of more sophisticated CSS controls, more reliable rendering through Design view and, of course, the new CSS-based Text Property Inspector all adding up to give the new Dreamweaver MX 2004 the legacy which will undoubtedly be referred to in future as the 'CSS upgrade'.

That's not to say other aspects have been ignored however, as regular HTML code editing support is improved with right-click coder tools; there's also find and replace improvements, and customisable syntax colouring takes some of the hard work out of hand coding.

Reference points too have been expanded to include updated O'Reilly content on SQL, ASP .NET and PHP, while the Tag Inspector and Tag Library Editor have had their content databases updated to reflect changes in their particular areas, as well as relating to the new CSS options that become available through CSS.

And if all that isn't enough to keep coders happy, the inclusion of a licensed version of HomeSite+, which combines ColdFusion Studio 5 and the regular HomeSite 5 titles (tucked away on the installation CD), should start to raise a few smiles.

WHAT IT ALL MEANS...

There's no denying that Dreamweaver now enjoys its enviable position as the definitive Web-authoring title, having put to shame related titles through its superior code-handling and ease of use, and the new version will certainly see things staying that way for some time yet.

The usual interface modifications and feature enhancements will certainly make users feel they have an updated version, but for many the benefits they provide will only become apparent as users migrate to the new version and put things into practice. Some features, such as the ability to crop and run basic image adjustment may be popular, while others such as Flash Elements may find limited use – but as every user is different, only time will tell.

However, the big development with Dreamweaver MX 2004 is its change of direction through promoting the use of CSS over HTML for content formatting. Macromedia has taken a bold step not just with Dreamweaver but also with integrating this feature into Flash, because it will mean a certain amount of adjustment as style sheet advocates transfer to the new working method.

There's no denying that style sheets are the way forward, but the average designer with a basic understanding of HTML may find the new process a little overwhelming, as they try to determine the full scope of CSS. But once this hurdle has been overcome, the future of Web design is set to take on a much more efficient route as the greater flexibility of control that the method allows kicks in.

The more technical developments also see Dreamweaver maturing into a serious and self-contained application that's moving away from its humble WYSIWYG origins to provide tools and controls for the technically

"THERE'S NO DENYING THAT STYLE SHEETS ARE THE WAY FORWARD, BUT THE AVERAGE DESIGNER WITH A BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF HTML MAY FIND THE NEW PROCESS A LITTLE OVERWHELMING..."

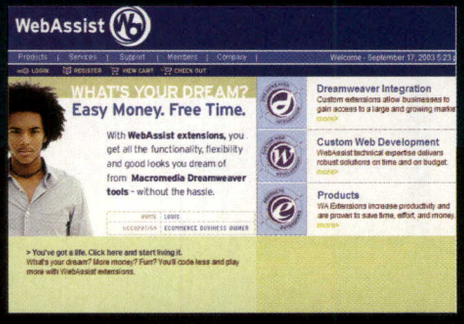
IN ACTION

TOP DREAMWEAVER SITES

THE NUMBER OF SITES DESIGNED WITH DREAMWEAVER GROWS DAILY. HERE, WE PRESENT THREE OF THE BIGGEST AND BEST AROUND...

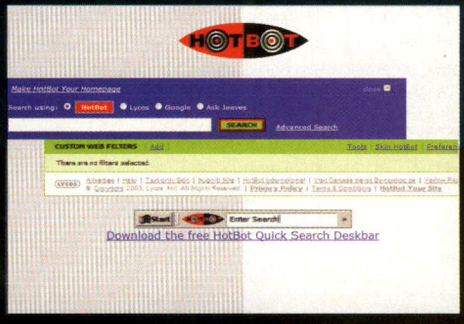
GULFSTREAM AEROSPACE
www.gulfstream.com

Selling planes usually means you have a bit of cash to spare and the Gulfstream Aerospace company certainly put a little into its site. Using Dreamweaver to bolt the whole thing together, the in-house team used Macromedia Flash and DevNet to enhance the experience.



WEBASSIST
www.webassist.com

With its close links to developing third-party programs for a number of Web development applications, it comes as quite a compliment to Macromedia that WebAssist has chosen Dreamweaver to create its own data-driven site.



HOTBOT
www.hotbot.com

And if that isn't enough to convince you of the respect Dreamweaver has now earned, consider HotBot. Dreamweaver was used to build a new user interface for the popular search engine, which is part of the Lycos network..

■ The built-in graphics editor saves time moving into a dedicated app, as you can compress, crop amd rotate within Dreamweaver

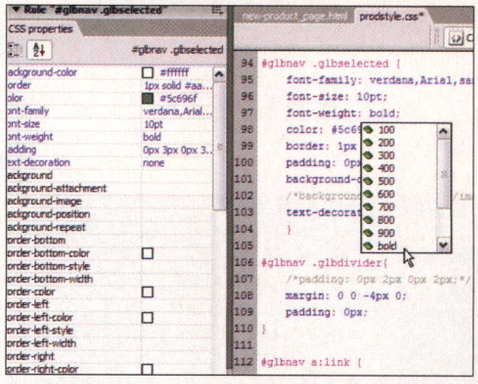
minded to stretch their imagination with the design support, making a greater range of options available.

Such developments throughout each of Dreamweaver's various upgrades over the last eight years since it was first introduced have helped to give the application the standing it now enjoys. And when put into context with other Studio MX 2004 titles, the future of Web-based content can only become more attractive and functional.

Dreamweaver now not only provides its original code, design and site-management tools, but also allows the creation and control of more dynamic content, has the ability to render content using more reliable CSS methods and benefits from the additional strengths provided by its Studio MX 2004 peers.

However, with the additional features and controls comes another level of complexity. As with Flash, Dreamweaver could start to become an application that needs specialist authors who are equally at home with image manipulation as they are with PHP. In some ways this can be seen as a benefit, as site content will start to be developed by specialist designers and developers more able to produce the most relevant content. But it might be interpreted as taking such titles away from the regular user, who may not have the time or inclination to make such a commitment to what is effectively a means to an end.

It appears that Web authoring, along with its designers, developers and users, is maturing, and the options provided through the Studio MX 2004 tools are set to take things to the next level. Users expect more than just words and pictures, designers want to do more than make pretty layouts, and developers are starting to realise their creative potential away from source code. The new Macromedia titles could be just the thing to help. ■



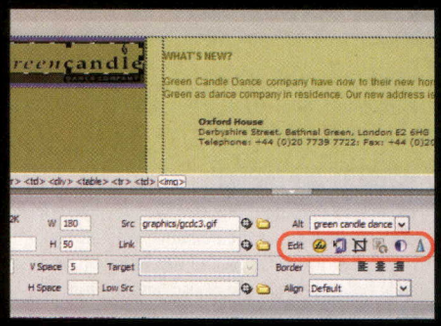
■ Code hints now provide contextual options for style sheet commands, making hand coding such elements far more reliable

"DREAMWEAVER NOW NOT ONLY PROVIDES ITS ORIGINAL CODE, DESIGN AND SITE-MANAGEMENT TOOLS, BUT ALSO ALLOWS THE CREATION AND CONTROL OF MORE DYNAMIC CONTENT"

DREAMWEAVER: NEW FEATURES

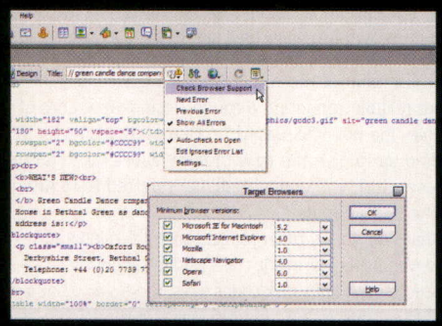
A RUNDOWN OF SIX NEW FEATURES YOU CAN LOOK FORWARD TO IN DREAMWEAVER

FEATURES



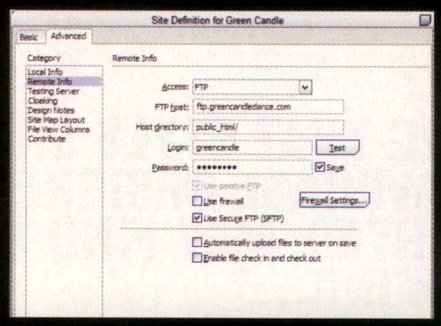
1. IMAGE EDITING

Along with the familiar option to transfer graphics to your chosen image editor, you can also perform basic adjustments including optimisation, cropping, rotation, brightness/contrast and sharpening on existing assets.



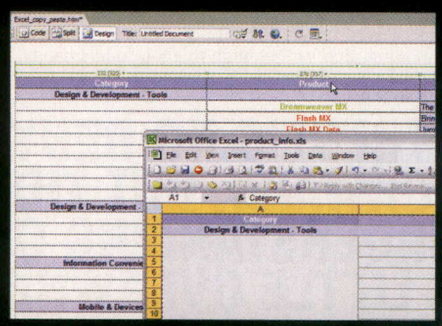
2. CROSS-BROWSER VALIDATION

Checks the current document for problem areas that may occur with your work when viewed through the more common browsers. Files can be validated against models provided by all major browsers including Opera.



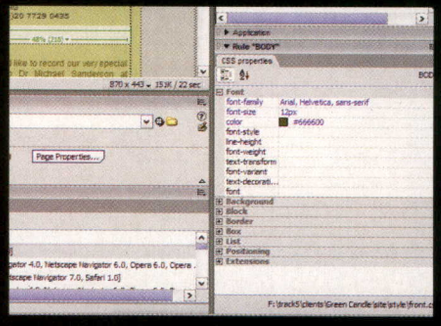
3. SECURE FTP

A new feature of interest to anyone wanting privacy is using Secure FTP to fully encrypt all file transfers and prevent unauthorised access to your data, files, usernames and passwords.



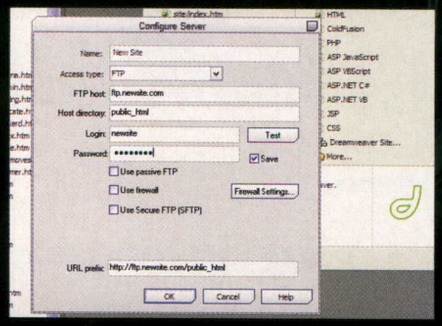
4. IMPORT OFFICE DOCUMENTS

Import entire documents or copy and paste elements from Word and Excel directly into Dreamweaver MX 2004 while preserving fonts, colours and CSS styles.



5. WORKING WITH STYLE

Cascading Style Sheets can be developed through familiar methods, although with access to the CSS Properties within its own panel, the editing of such features becomes a much simpler task.



6. SITELESS FILE EDITING

Increase the flexibility of Dreamweaver as a tool by editing files, manipulating databases and changing code directly on remote FTP and network servers without first setting up a Dreamweaver site.

ALL BANDWIDTH TRIPLED!!!

Our Data Centres. Your peace of mind.

Microsoft CERTIFIED Partner — Host Europe

Step 1: Select Operating System

Cobalt RaQ

from **£39.99*** per month
The original "Web-in-a-box" solution.

RedHat Linux

NEW! Linux Version 9

from **£49.99*** per month
RedHat Linux is the industry standard for web hosting.

Microsoft Windows

NEW! Windows Server 2003

from **£49.99*** per month
Microsoft Windows, the choice of small and large businesses alike.

Sun Solaris

from £199.99 per month
The market leader for reliability and performance.

Co-location

from £99.99 per month
Your servers safe in our Data Centre.

Step 2: Select Specification

RaQ 128 NEW x3 Triple Bandwidth
128 MB/20GB/**15 GB Data Transfer** (was 5)

RaQ 256 NEW x3 Triple Bandwidth
256 MB/20.4GB/**60 GB Data Transfer** (was 20)

RaQ 512 NEW x3 Triple Bandwidth
512 MB/30GB/**90 GB Data Transfer** (was 30)

RaQ 550 256 NEW x3 Triple Bandwidth
256MB/40GB/**60 GB Data Transfer** (was 20)

RaQ 550 512 NEW x3 Triple Bandwidth
512MB/2x80GB/**90 GB Data Transfer** (was 30)

Entry NEW x3 Triple Bandwidth
Intel Celeron 2Ghz/128MB/40GB/
30 GB Data Transfer (was 10)

Pro NEW x3 Triple Bandwidth
P4 2.4Ghz/256MB/80GB/
60 GB Data Transfer (was 20)

Ultra NEW x3 Triple Bandwidth
P4 3Ghz/512MB/2x80GB/
90 GB Data Transfer (was 30)

Ultra II NEW x3 Triple Bandwidth
2x Xeon 2.4Ghz/1GB/2x80GB Hard Disks (RAID 1)/**120 GB Data Transfer** (was 40)

Enterprise NEW x3 Triple Bandwidth
2x Xeon 2.8Ghz/1GB/4x80GB Hard Disks (RAID 5)/**160 GB Data Transfer** (was 55)

Xeon Plus NEW x3 Triple Bandwidth
2x Xeon 3Ghz/2GB/4x120GB Hard Disks (RAID5)/**160 GB Data Transfer** (was 55)

Xeon MAX NEW x3 Triple Bandwidth
4x Xeon 2Ghz/2GB/4x120GB Hard Disks (RAID5)/**300 GB Data Transfer** (was 100)

Data Class NEW x3 Triple Bandwidth
2x AMD Opteron 1.8Ghz/4GB/4x200GB Hard Disks (RAID5)/**600 GB Data Transfer** (was 200)

Advance x3 Triple Bandwidth
2xUltra Web Servers/Ultra II Database & Ultra II Mail Server/**300 GB Data Transfer** (was 100)

Corporate x3 Triple Bandwidth
3xUltra II Web Servers/Ultra Mail Server/ Enterprise Database Server/**750 GB Data Transfer** (was 250)

Fire V100 128 NEW x3 Triple Bandwidth
500MHZ/128MB/40GB EIDE/
60 GB Data Transfer (was 20)

Fire V100 1GB NEW x3 Triple Bandwidth
500MHZ/1GB/2x40GB EIDE/
90 GB Data Transfer (was 30)

Fire V120 1GB NEW x3 Triple Bandwidth
650MHZ/1GB/36GB Ultra SCSI/
120 GB Data Transfer (was 40)

Enterprise NEW x3 Triple Bandwidth
2x450MHZ/2GB/2x18GB Ultra SCSI/
300 GB Data Transfer (was 100)

Co-location
Your server safe and secure in our Data Centre. Choose from a range of data transfer (bandwidth) per month and benefit from 24/7/365 unlimited technical support.

Pro NEW x3 Triple Bandwidth
Half rack of 20 U's of 19" rack server space/up to 30 IP addresses/
135 GB Data Transfer (was 45)

Ultra NEW x3 Triple Bandwidth
Full rack of 40 U's of 19" rack server space/up to 60 IP addresses/
210 GB Data Transfer (was 70)

Step 3: Select Security

Firewall
£100 per month

Protect your machine from unwanted visitors. Web based control panel allows you to add rules and deny undesirable visitors.

Backup
Daily - £120 per month
Weekly - £60 per month

Running databases, holding customer information or involved in e-commerce? If your answer is "yes" then order backup now and benefit from free restores if required!

Advanced Systems Monitoring
£30 per month

The ultimate tool for knowing how your server is operating. Pre-empt critical failure and minimise server downtime with messaging via e-mail or SMS.

Plus Package
only £199.99 per month
(Save £600 per year)

Firewall, Daily Backup and Advanced Systems Monitoring bundled to save over £600 per year! The complete solution to your Web hosting security.

Step 4: Relax with...

FREE AND UNLIMITED Technical Support

Unlike most of our competitors we do not charge for technical support or aftersales service. Available with every Dedicated Servers product, you can call or e-mail our support team on an unlimited basis, 24/7/365.

Service Level Agreement

Standard SLA:
Our Industry leading SLA is your guarantee of a totally reliable service. We'll credit you if it's not! Benefit from 99.9% connectivity, 30 minute reboot guarantee, 1:1 contention ratio on bandwidth and a price freeze-forever!

Advanced SLA:
Specially tailored for Enterprise level services and above, the Advanced SLA is perfect for mission critical sites. Backed by a money back guarantee, benefit from 99.9% connectivity, four hour hardware resolution, 30 minute reboot guarantee, 1:1 contention ratio on bandwidth, a price freeze and a named personal Account Manager.

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Our UK Data Centres are designed, owned and managed by us. Situated in London and Nottingham, they benefit from the latest security, backup, power and climate control features available.

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Internetworks Free Subscription for 6 months!

Dedicated Servers have teamed up with one of UK's leading Internet magazines, Internet Works to bring you a great offer. Purchase any dedicated server from our range and receive a free six months subscription.

Pre-Pay Bonus Pack

A huge bonus if you take out any dedicated server with a value of £2000 or more and pay for the year in advance. Each pack includes 5 leading books on your chosen operating system, that will help you get the most out of your dedicated server; as well as great Host Europe merchandise.

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Dedicated Servers

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*Older specified servers. Limited Offer.

PERFECT COLOUR

WORDS: DANNY McALEER

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF COLOUR AND THE BEST WAY TO USE IT ON THE WEB

Usually, when it comes to picking a colour scheme for a Web site, most of us do so quite instinctively. It seems that without much in the way of conscious thought, we all appear to have the ability to intuitively pluck out individual colours that are appropriate for a given subject or situation, and combinations of colours that will work well together.

This awareness of the more abstract notions of colour and its psychological effects is incredibly important in design. To recognise that certain tones imbue impartiality, authoritativeness and an emotional distance, while others are friendlier, livelier and more fun, helps enormously to better convey the purpose of the artwork and any messages contained within. After all, as well as emotion, colours can also carry meanings or metaphor, such as red for danger.

Unfortunately, being liberal with your palette selections isn't always practical when designing for the Web. As seems to be the case with all things online, picking colour schemes is not without its caveats – the rules that govern the correct use of colour. But that's where our guide will come in handy. Below, we'll introduce some of the concepts of how colour is stored and rendered by your computer and Web browser, and how your choices may be limited by these technicalities. Once you've gained an appreciation of how colours translate to the Web, you will hopefully be able to make more informed decisions about your choices of palette in future site projects...

SWATHES OF COLOUR

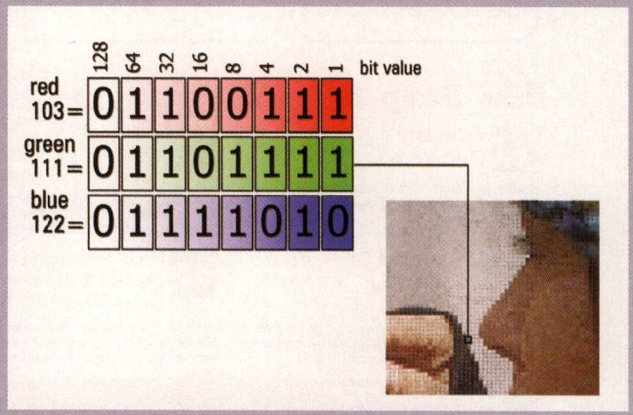
The human eye can perceive more than a million different colours. To replicate such a vast range, most modern computers use 24-bit displays. This bit-depth refers to the number of binary digits of information needed to describe each pixel's colour. A colour on a computer comprises three signals: red, green and blue. Mixing these signals in varying intensities gives a total of 16,777,216 variations (256 x 256 x 256). Twenty-four bit depth is often called 'true colour', since it offers the truest representation of real-life.

However, there's more than one colour mode on a computer, and different ways to store colours. For example, eight-bit displays use an indexed palette. You can think of this as a paint-by-numbers key. This key contains 256 24-bit colour boxes, each of which is assigned a unique number (0 to 255). It's the number of the colour in the palette that's stored in the pixel, not the colour mix itself. The third colour depth is called High Colour, which uses 15 or 16 bits. In this mode, only five bits are allocated per colour, with the remainder either used to enhance the green signal or completely ignored.

"A COLOUR ON A COMPUTER COMPRISES THREE SIGNALS: RED, GREEN AND BLUE. MIXING THESE SIGNALS IN VARYING INTENSITIES GIVES A TOTAL OF 16,777,216 VARIATIONS (256 X 256 X 256)"

Because of the differences in the way colours are stored in different depths, there's no guarantee that the colour you choose will look identical on another system, but there is some reprieve in the Web safe Colour palette. These 216 colours are almost always guaranteed to be consistent across all platforms and browsers.

The reason for such a limited number of colours is to accommodate the lowest depth (8-bit), while also reserving 40 of the available 256 for the Operating System. This limitation is further compounded by the choice of colours. They aren't based upon any artistic merit, just the even distribution of values across the three colour channels (see diagram).



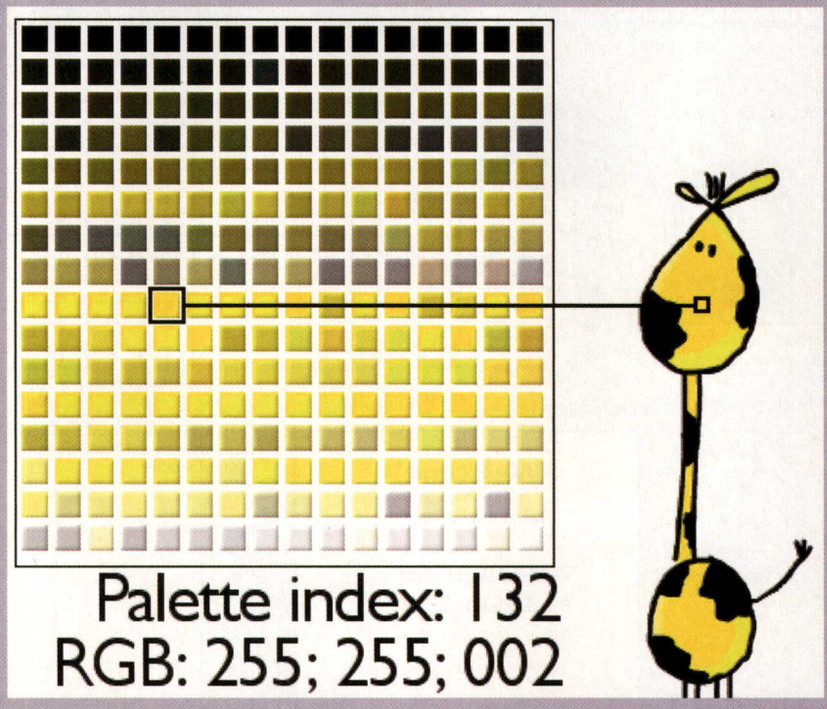
Each pixel contains 24-bits of information to describe its colour. This is arranged into three sets of 8-bit values for the red, green and blue signals in true colour mode

DITHERING ABOUT

When a browser is asked to display a colour not supported by the screen depth, it can do one of two things. It can shift the colour to the nearest supported tone, which is why you can have visible inconsistencies between rendered colours (such as the page background) and the colours in images on the page. The second option is to mix or 'dither' a new tone from two or more of the existing colours in the supported palette.

Dithering is used to create the illusion that there are more colours in an image than there really are. Juxtaposed pixels are coloured differently using the palette, and the way they are arranged creates the in-between shades.

Web browsers opt for an ordered dither, which is a patterned arrangement usually in the form of a lattice or chequer-board. This can often



Because of the way eight-bit colour modes work, the computer is able to render any one of over 16 million colours, albeit only 256 at a time

"IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, DITHERING SHOULD BE AVOIDED FOR LINE DIAGRAMS, FLAT COLOUR ILLUSTRATIONS AND GRAPHIC-BASED TEXT, BECAUSE IT CAN OBFUSCATE THE IMAGE'S FINER DETAILS"

mislead the eye into seeing a textured surface rather than tonal gradation. Graphics packages, on the other hand, tend to give you other options: randomised or mathematical algorithm-based patterns. Neither of these methods has uniform appearance and as a consequence are rather more convincing.

In moderation, either form of dithering works, especially where the resolution of the display is sufficient to disguise the individual pixel. However, if at all possible, dithering should be avoided for line diagrams, flat colour illustrations and graphic-based text, because it can obfuscate the image's finer details. And, like palette shifting, dithering can also cause variations in colour between those in images and those coded in HTML.

COLOUR NOMENCLATURE

Commonly, colours in a computer are expressed as RGB values. This is the mix of Red, Green and Blue in the signal, and is written thus: 255-0-0 for red, 255-255-0 for yellow and 0-128-0 for a medium green. However, when colours are referenced in HTML, they are represented as a hexadecimal value (base sixteen). The hexadecimal value actually correlates to the intensities of the red, green and blue content of the colour. The first two digits for red, the second for green and the third for blue.

To use the above examples again, red is expressed as FF0000, yellow as FFFF00 and green as 008000. It's best to work in this format if you're specifically designing for the Web because it enables you to more easily compare the colours in an image with those you code into the HTML. Interestingly, many of the more regularly used colours can also be referred to by name using CSS. There are 136 named definitions for colours. However, not all of these are within the 216 Web safe palette, and therefore are not necessarily guaranteed to display the exact hue on every browser or platform.

The final way in which colours can be expressed on a computer is CMYK, a mix of Cyan, Magenta, Yellow and Black. Given that your Web pages are designed to be viewed on RGB monitors, there is really little point in colouring in CMYK format (it's only really appropriate for print design). In fact, colours in an image converted to CMYK are rarely displayed properly onscreen, often appearing dull or completely incorrectly.

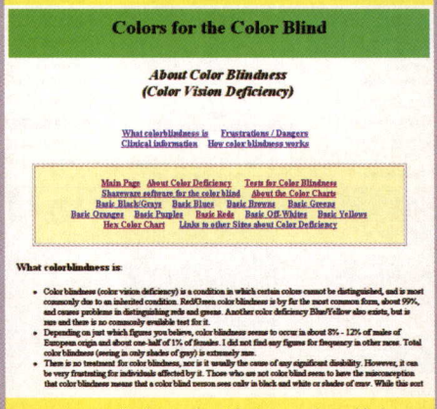
THE RIGHT SCHEME

Along with the physical positioning of elements like tables, blocks of text and pictures, colour is integral to a Web page's structure. It can be used to great effect to create spatial and navigational awareness. For example, using bright and vibrant colours in the navigational bar will instantly draw

ACCESSIBILITY AND COLOUR

When you decide on your site's colour scheme it's important to consider the impact it has on the accessibility of the content. The most obvious implementation of this form of usability is creating sufficient contrast between the foreground and background colours. It's certainly no coincidence that most sites employ a scheme of black or dark text upon a white or light background (or vice versa). This bold contrast enables visitors with colour perception difficulties, or the folk who are using monochrome screens (older WAP-enabled phones or PDAs in particular), to read the text without hindrance.

But one other factor that's sometimes neglected is the reliance upon colour, whether in text or images, to convey specific information. In order to satisfy the W3C's recommendations for accessibility (**www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT/#gl-color**), a Web page must ensure that all info conveyed with colour is also recognisable without colour. For instance, the most common type of colour-blindness manifests itself as a perceptual confusion between reds and greens. Suggesting to a visitor to push the red button without some additional textual inference would therefore be impossible when he or she is presented with an array of buttons that all appear to be the same colour.


Colors for the Color Blind

About Color Blindness
(Color Vision Deficiency)

What colorblindness is Frustrations / Dangers
Clinical information How color blindness works

Main Page About Color Deficiency Tests for Color Blindness
Shareware software for the color blind About the Color Charts
Basic Black/Grays Basic Blues Basic Browns Basic Greens
Basic Oranges Basic Purples Basic Reds Basic Off-Whites Basic Yellows
Hex Color Chart Links to other Sites about Color Deficiency

What colorblindness is:

- Color blindness (color vision deficiency) is a condition in which certain colors cannot be distinguished, and is most commonly due to an inherited condition. Red/Green color blindness is by far the most common form, about 99%, and causes problems in distinguishing reds and greens. Another color deficiency Blue/Yellow also exists, but is rare and there is no commonly available test for it.
- Depending on just which figures you believe, color blindness seems to occur in about 8% - 12% of males of European origin and about one-half of 1% of females. I did not find any figures for frequency in other races. Total color blindness (seeing in only shades of gray) is extremely rare.
- There is no treatment for color blindness, nor is it usually the cause of any significant disability. However, it can be very frustrating for individuals affected by it. Those who are not color blind seem to have the misconception that color blindness means that a color blind person sees only in black and white or shades of gray. While this sort

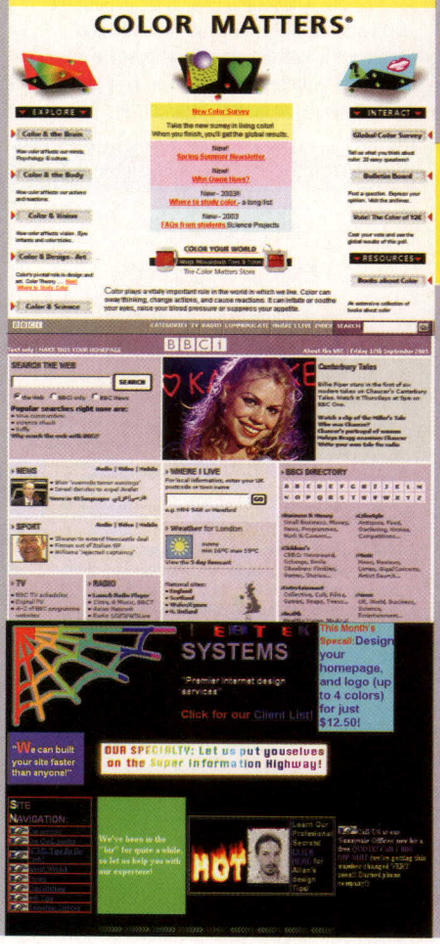
■ If you suffer from colour-blindness and need help with colour picking, or you just want to find out more about this problem, visit this fantastic site: **www.toledo-bend.com/colorblind/aboutCB.html**

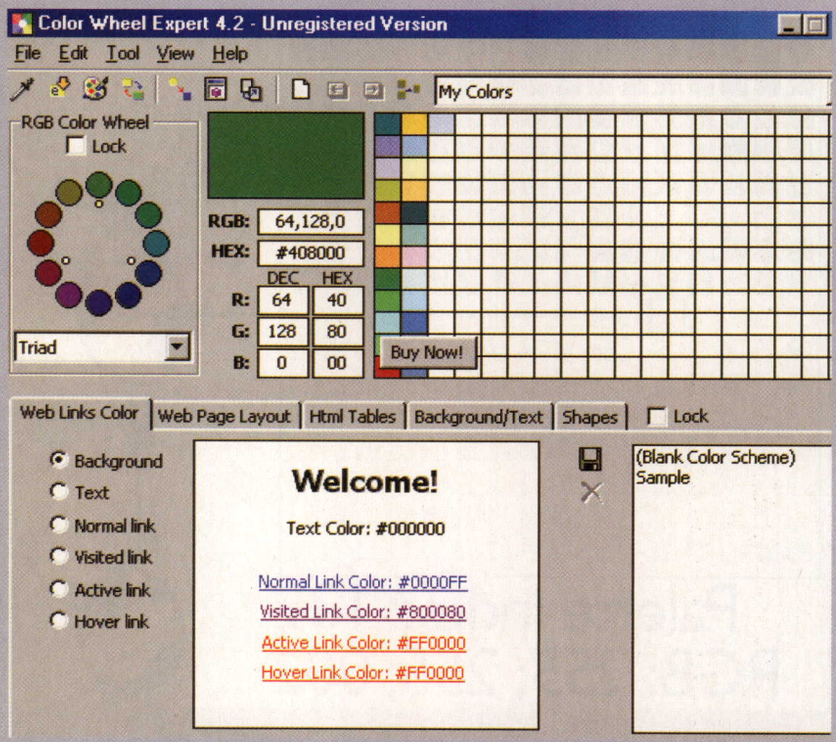
BOOKMARKS

NAME: COLOR MATTERS
URL: www.colormatters.com
This site discusses the importance of colour in design, including the influence on mood and other psychological factors. It also contains a fantastic digest of colour in digital images and computers, plus many links to other places of interest.

NAME: BBCi
URL: www.bbc.co.uk
The BBC's home page perfectly illustrates the subtle use of colour to divide its content into clearly defined sections for each lead story. Notice also that the whole colour scheme is built around a cache of very similar complementary tones.

NAME: WEBTEK SYSTEMS
URL: www.geocities.com/webtekrocks
To pick upon one personal site and chastise its misuse of colour is perhaps a little unfair, so we chose to pick on this one that purports to be a Web design service. Alternatively, for the shock of your life, have a peek here: **www.panix.com/~clays/biff/biff.cgi**





If you need help choosing the right combination of colours there is plenty of software you can use, such as Colour Wheel Expert (www.abitom.com)

"RATHER THAN SPLATTER A RAINBOWFUL ON THE PAGE, PICK JUST THREE OR FOUR PRINCIPAL COLOURS THAT COMBINE BOTH HIGH CONTRAST AND COMPLEMENTARY TONES"

the attention of your visitors to this important feature. Variations on the base colour scheme are also often used to segregate different parts of a site, although you should never rely solely on colour for either the demarcation of sections or navigation (see panel on accessibility). The use of neutral tones, particularly white, can help reduce clutter, and by extension, better focus the attention of your visitors as well.

Of equal importance is creating a sense of visual harmony with your colour scheme. Not only with itself (in choosing a blend of complementary colours), but also with the site's subject matter and editorial tone: vibrant tones for content aimed at children; more sober tones for transmitting factual data.

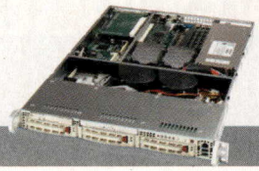
A final note of colouring caution concerns the technical caveats. You must ensure to the best of your testing ability that the colours you've used are accurately reproduced on a number of different systems. This does mean limiting yourself to the Web-safe palette for HTML and CSS-coding colours into the background and other elements, rather than picking any old hue.

The actual scheme that you use for your Web site is an entirely emotive issue, but exercise a little restraint. Rather than splatter a rainbowful on the page, pick just three or four principal colours that combine both high contrast (for the background and foreground) and complementary tones. These can be gleaned from the elements you intend to put on the page: photos, products (if it's an online shop you're designing), or from the site's logo. Most of us possess at least a semblance of sanity in the taste stakes, but if you get stuck there are colour guides and wheels (see **colormatch.dk**), or even picker programs like Colour Schemer (**www.colorschemer.com**) which can be used for inspiration. Armed with this wee wedge of colour theory and a modicum of decorum, you should do just fine.

The 216 Web-safe colours and their respective hexadecimal values. Since the colour scale starts at 0, the maximum value is further divided into 5 equally spaced parts, giving us the palette values 0, 51, 102, 153, 204 and 255. Or, in hexadecimal notation: 00, 33, 66, 99, CC, FF

4DHosting

"People Powered!"



COLOCATION

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- 1U Rack Space in RedBus (Meridian Gate)s
- 100mbps Switch Port
- 2 IP Addresses (More available on request)
- 50GB BGP-4 Data Transfer per Month
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- 100% Availability Network SLA
- Optional APC Sockets and NAS Space

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- 2U Rack Space in RedBus (Meridian Gate)
- 2x100mbps Switch Port
- 4 IP Addresses (More available on request)
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- Backup Generators/UPS Power Supplies
- 100% Availability Network SLA
- Optional APC Sockets and NAS Space

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- 4U Rack Space in RedBus (Meridian Gate)
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- Backup Generators/UPS Power Supplies
- 100% Availability Network SLA
- Optional APC Sockets and NAS Space

All packages include:
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- 24/7 Reboots
- Optional APC Socket
- 2 IP Addresses per U (More available on request)
- Detailed bandwidth MRTG reports showing:
- Current month usage
- Historic usage (past months)
- Detailed graphs for day/week/month/year
- Predicted usage this month

Extras:-

Server Specific Firewall:
£150 per month

Enterprise Monitoring:
£100 per month

SSL Certificates:
£100 per year

Domain Registration:
UK Domains:
£5.80 every 2 years
gTLD Domains:
£8.80 every year

DEDICATED SERVERS

Standard Features:
Linux RedHat 9 / Online Control Panel for Administration / 100Mbit Fast Ethernet Interface Full Administrator Access / APC Socket for Remote Reboots / 2 IP Addresses (More available on request) Server Monitoring Service / Network and Hardware SLA

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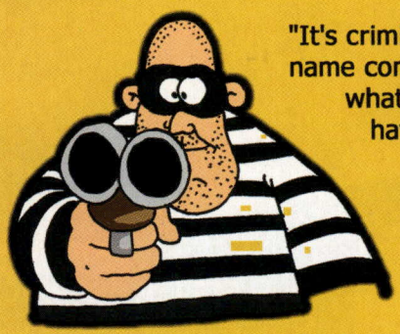

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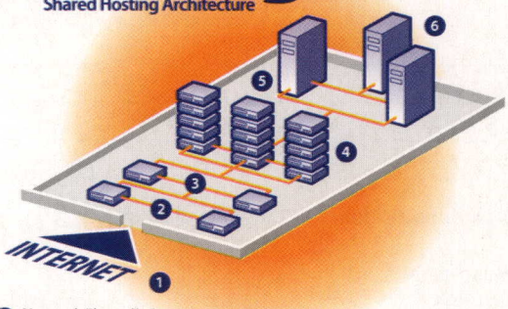

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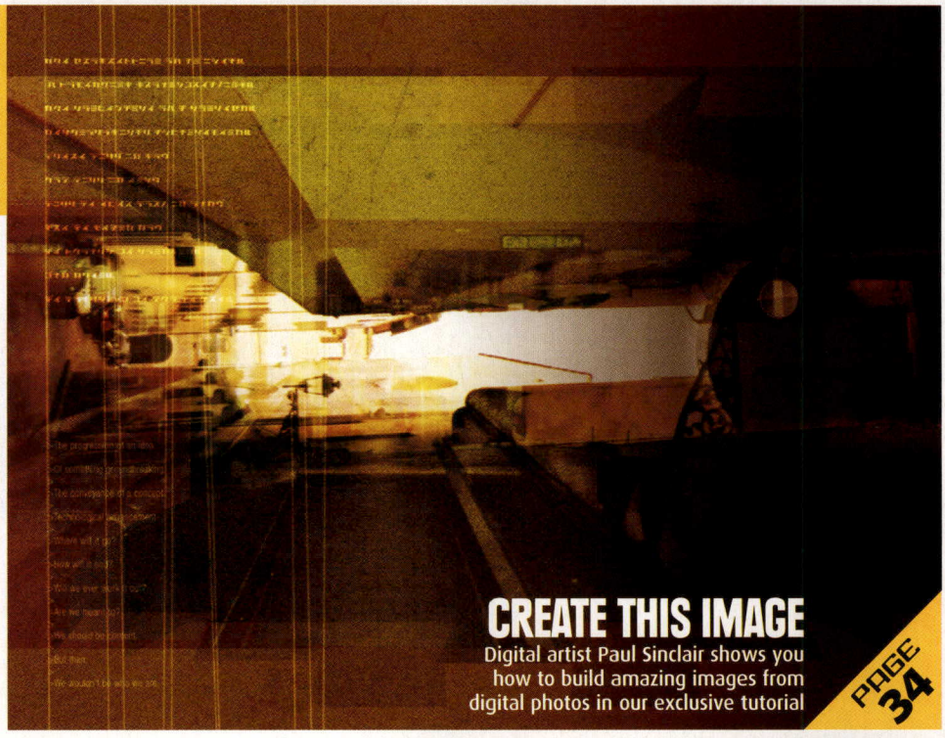

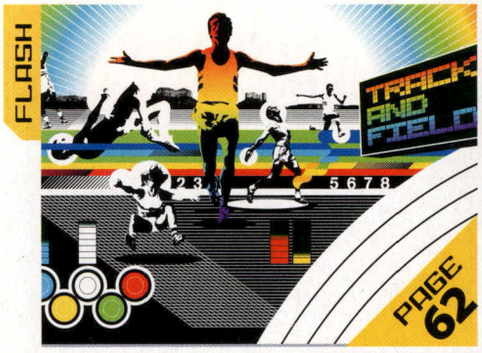

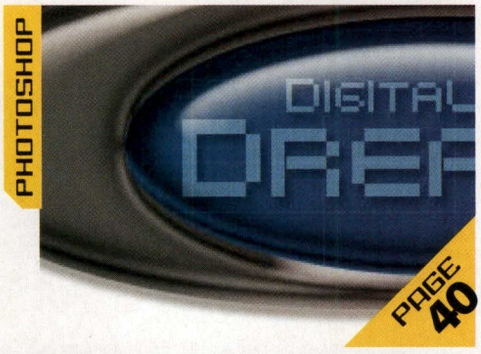

TUTORIALS

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We rate each tutorial according to difficulty, but beginners needn't feel daunted by seemingly difficult workshops, and likewise, advanced readers should find something useful in less complex projects. We aim to write in a no-nonsense style that talks you through the creation process from start to finish with the minimum of technical jargon. Also, because each tutorial is designed to show you one particular facet of a program, we think that every reader will find something to interest them.

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TUTORIAL: PHOTOSHOP
CREATE AN ABSTRACT IMAGE IN PHOTOSHOP

THE EXPERT: PAUL SINCLAIR

Paul is a graphic designer who cites his references as comic illustrator Dave McKean and films like Se7en and Memento. He has an HND in Electronic Graphic Design, and has contributed to *New Masters of Photoshop* and *Photoshop Most Wanted* publications. He says his atmospheric images are "designed to create something visually interesting, whatever the medium required to do so".

>The progression of an idea
>
>Of something groundbreaking
>
>The conveyance of a concept.
>
>Technological advancement
>
>Where will it go?
>
>How will it end?
>
>Will we ever work it out?
>
>Are we meant to?
>
>We should be content.
>
>But then,
>
>We wouldn't be who we are.

CREATE THIS STUNNING IMAGE IN PHOTOSHOP USING SCANS AND LAYERS

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Create the image you see on this page by merging several photos

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
1-2 hours

ON THE DISC
Tutorial files: airport.jpg, alleyway.jpg, archway.jpg, final-image.jpg

Abstract images can be your flexible friend. We show you how to create an amazing picture and develop your Photoshop skills

Many Web designers use Photoshop on a daily basis, yet only touch on its immense power by creating Web buttons and icons. Sure, this is a great way of creating the best-looking navigation tools around, but it's also a bit like using a Ferrari to drive to the local shops every day. Photoshop has so much more to offer, and it pays dividends to learn more about what the powerhouse image-editor can do for you.

In our tutorial, we're going to create the stunning artwork you see on these pages. As you'll see over the next five pages, this image is actually three images placed on top of each other, with some nifty layer blends helping you to create an array of impressive effects. In all, this is the perfect way to fashion simply incredible images that will impressive everyone no end when you place it on your site. Not only that, but learning how to use layers to best effect is an absolute must for anyone hoping to get maximum results out of Photoshop.

In terms of the design style we've used, the subtle approach is very important when creating abstract art. You want something that will make the viewer stop and think for a while, so depth and detail are very important. In this tutorial we'll take you through the construction of an image from start to finish, so you can see the ideas and techniques necessary to produce abstract pieces.

TUTORIAL: PHOTOSHOP
CREATE AN ABSTRACT IMAGE IN PHOTOSHOP

BOOKMARKS

HANDS-ON TRAINING BY DOC ZONE
www.handson.nu

This site has lots of handy tips for things like transparency, chrome, bevel etc, that can be used as they are or adapted into an arsenal to use in conjunction with other techniques.

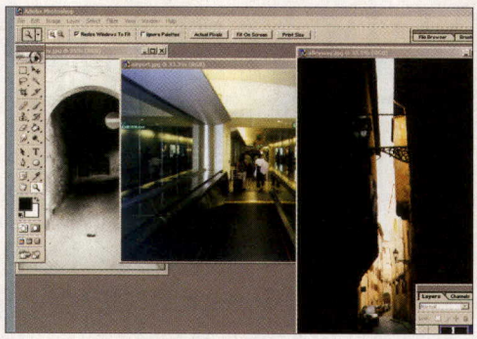
PHOTOSHOPCAFE
www.photoshopcafe.com

Another great site for tips, tricks and tutorials. The guy who runs this (Colin Smith) has also had several books published on the subject. Nice rock textures.

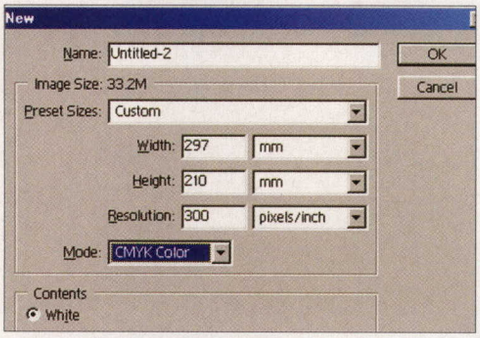
GEEK SPEAK

CROP
This is the method by which you separate the sections of the image you want to keep with those you wish to discard. You simply draw a rectangle around the area you want to remain, then double-click to remove all other areas.

TRANSFORM
As the name suggests, this tool allows you to alter a shape or image. The impressive thing about the Transform tool, however, is the impressive array of tools it manages to pack into its mighty utility belt. From resizing through to weird skews, this really is a one-stop shop for tweaking your images.

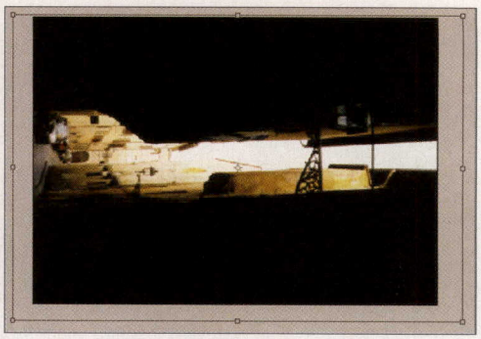


1 OUR SOURCE IMAGES
We'll be using these three photographs to create our image. It's always better to use photos you've taken yourself for this type of work, as you can take specific shots you know you'll use at some point, and you also have no worries over copyright issues.

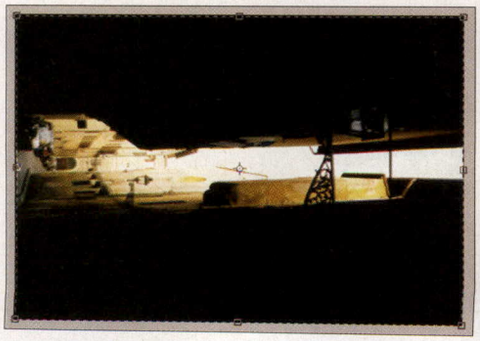


2 SETTING UP THE CANVAS
Open up a new document in Photoshop, 297mm wide by 210mm high, resolution 300dpi. Whether you decide to go for RGB or CMYK at this point is up to you; however, be warned that the layer properties do have different results.

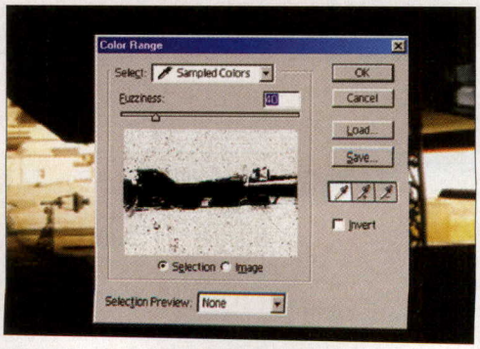
3 GET THE FIRST IMAGE ON THE CANVAS
Open up the file 'alleyway.jpg', and drag it onto the canvas using the Move tool. We're going to use this as the main focus of light in the image, so we need to flip it 90 degrees clockwise. Either go to Edit > Transform > 90 degrees CW or Press Ctrl & T then right-click and select 90 degrees CW.



4 SCALE UP THE ALLEYWAY SHOT
Next, we want to scale it up so that it fits the whole canvas. While it's still got the Transform box around it, hold down the Shift key and drag the corners out sufficiently to place the image so that the light area is fairly central. Press Enter to accept the transformation.

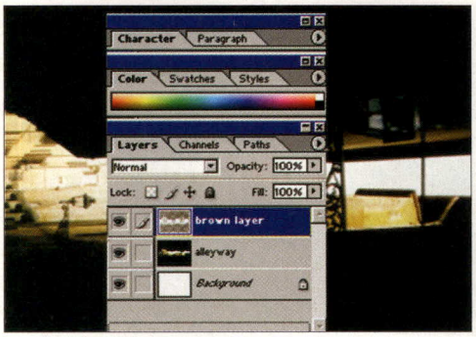


5 CROP THE IMAGE
Crop this image now so the processor only has to deal with the canvas size and not loads of stuff outside it. Press C to select Crop, drag around the image and hit Enter. It's best to name layers as you go: right-click the layer in the palette and go to Properties (for V5 or earlier, double-click the layer).



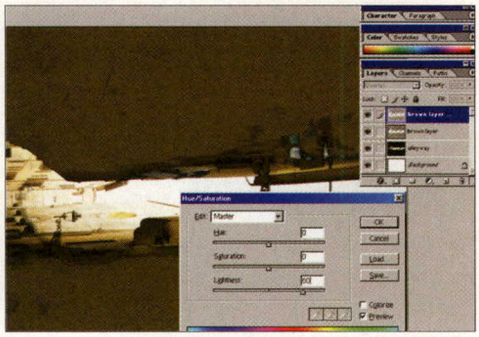
6 LIGHTEN UP BLACK AREA
Go to Select, Colour Range and click the Colour Sampler on the black area. Hit OK. Click the New Layer icon in the Layer palette. Click the Foreground Colour box to bring up the Colour Picker, and pick a mid brown. Fill your selection with it (Alt & Backspace) and deselect (Ctrl & D).

CREATE AN ABSTRACT IMAGE IN PHOTOSHOP



7 DUPLICATE LAYER

Name this layer and duplicate it by dragging it onto the New Layer icon as shown. We now need to scale it up to add some roughness to the image. Transform and drag the image out so you get an even scale around the image. Switch this layer to Overlay in the Layer Properties box.

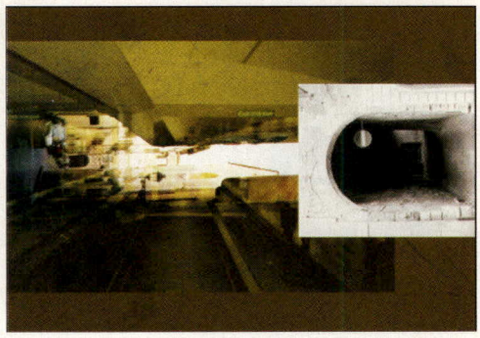


8 LIGHTEN THE LAYER

Next, to add more depth to our image, we need to lighten the layer we've just duplicated. Press Ctrl & U to bring up the Hue/Saturation palette, and move the lightness slider to +60. Click OK.

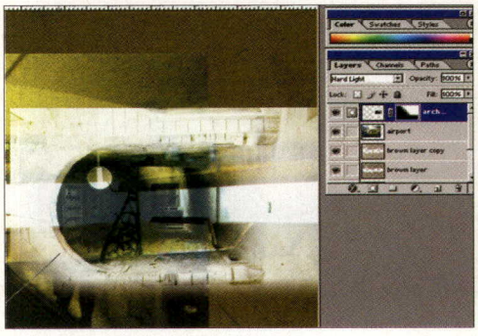
9 GET TO THE AIRPORT

Open 'airport.jpg' up and, as before, drag it onto your canvas. Again we want to scale this up, but not as big as the canvas this time, as shown. Again we will switch this layer to Overlay.



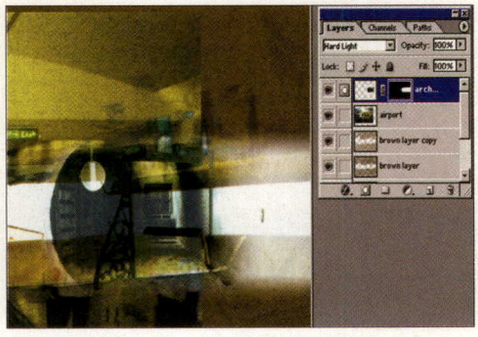
10 POSITION THE ARCHWAY

For the last of our images, open up 'archway.jpg' and drag it onto the canvas. Transform it 90 degrees counter-clockwise, and position it to the right-hand side so that the top of the arch roughly lines up with the middle of the light area. Switch this layer to Hard Light.



11 MASKING THE ARCHWAY

Click on the Add Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layer palette, and select the Gradient tool (press G). Making sure it's set to Foreground To Transparent and that black is your foreground colour, start dragging in from the edge of the Archway pic.



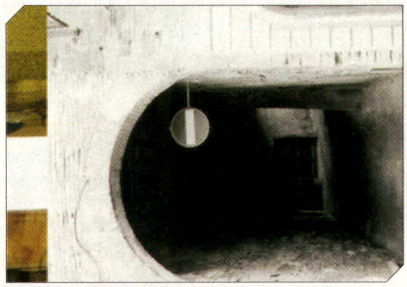
12 ARCHWAY MASKED

Keep doing this until you've taken out most of the white wall. If you mask off too much, you can bring areas back in simply by switching your foreground colour to white (pressing X toggles background and foreground colours) and using an airbrush.

TECHNIQUE

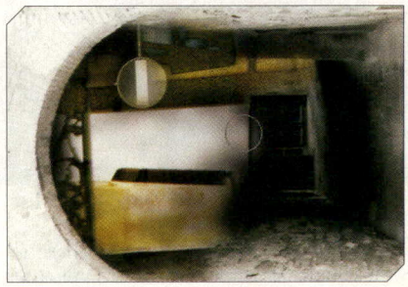
LAYER MASKS

What we'll do here is go into more depth with regards to layer masking. It's a good idea to use this whenever you need to do a montage image, because rather than erasing, where you lose the information, layer masks give you the option of bringing the bits you want back in.



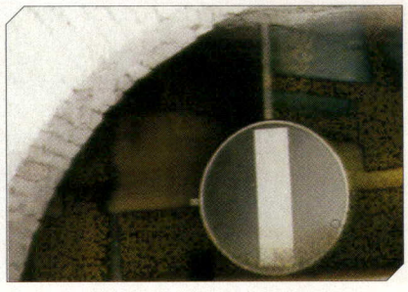
1 STARTING POINT

Using a section of the main tutorial image, we'll start by masking some of the dark area in the archway to reveal details from the Airport layer below. This could be done using Screen or Lighten in the Layer properties but we don't want to erase the darkness, so we'll just mask it.



2 REMOVING AREAS OF THE IMAGE

First of all, we've added our layer mask to the Archway layer, and used a soft-edged brush set at 50% opacity to start painting out most of the dark area. As you can see, we've gone over the sign and some of the archway brickwork – not a problem.



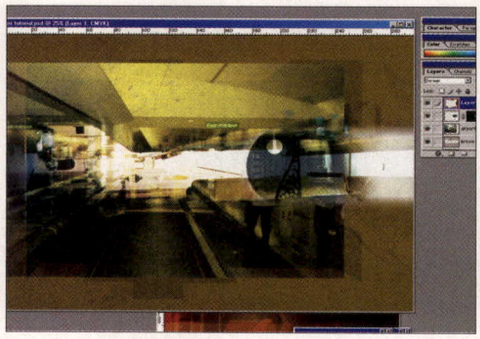
3 BRINGING THE IMAGE BACK IN

To restore the sign on the Archway layer, simply switch the foreground colour to white instead of black (making sure you keep the layer mask active), zoom right in, and using a much smaller brush start painting in the sign. Stick to 50% opacity or less on the brushes, unless you have a very steady hand and want to bump it up to something higher.

TUTORIAL: PHOTOSHOP
CREATE AN ABSTRACT IMAGE IN PHOTOSHOP

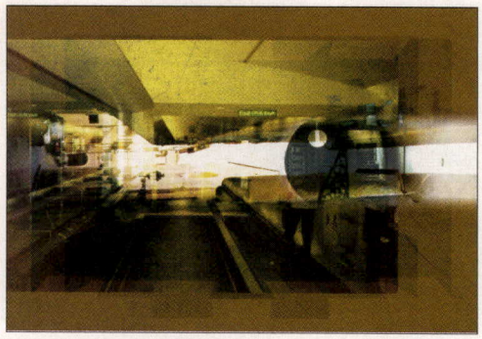
13 CREATE A BORDER

To create a border for this image we're using the Lasso tool (press L). If you hold down the Alt key, you can click and drag straight lines out very quickly and easily to make an irregular selection. We've created a new layer and roughly followed the perspective lines in the image.



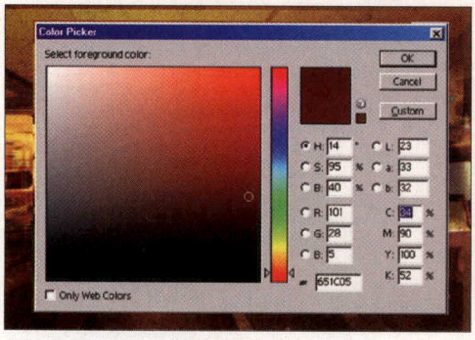
14 BORDER FILL

Once you're happy with your shape, invert the selection (Ctrl & Shift & I) and select a colour to fill this area. We've chosen a reddish brown to warm things up a bit. Change the layer opacity to 30% and Screen.



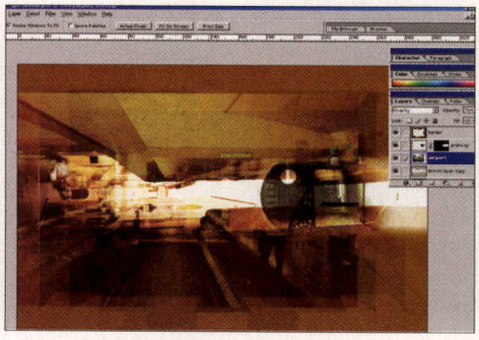
15 DUPLICATE BORDER

Next duplicate the Border layer you've just created and flip it horizontally by dragging the Border layer down onto the New Layer icon, then press Ctrl & T (to transform) and right-click on the image to bring up the menu. Select Transform Horizontal and press the Enter key.



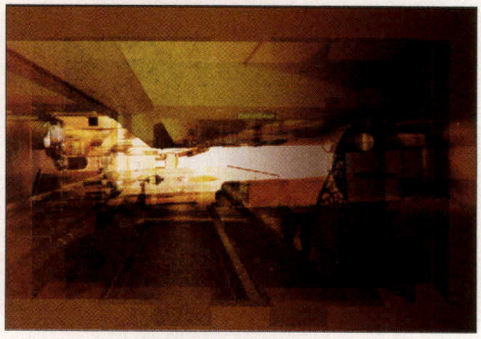
16 COLOUR SELECTION

This image needs warming up a bit more, so we're going to add a new layer and fill it with a warm red/brown. Fill the layer and switch it to Overlay and 80% opacity.



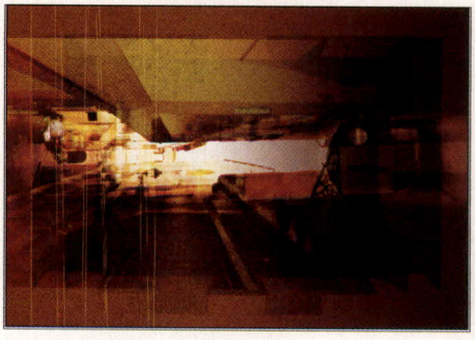
17 FINE-TUNE THE AIRPORT

We're going to drop the opacity down on the Airport layer slightly to lose some of the contrast and hold it together a bit more. 70% seems about right. Pieces like this are all about doing what looks and feels right.



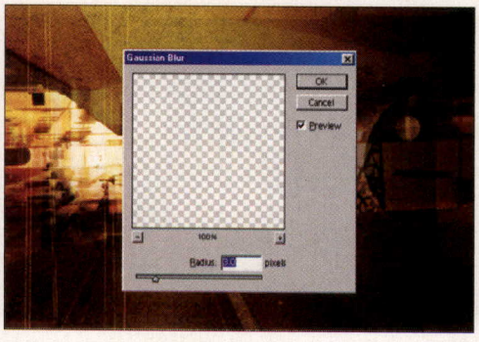
18 BLACK GRADIENT

Create a new layer and, starting from the right edge (make sure to select Black), drag a gradient to the middle. Move this layer between the Airport and Archway, and switch to Multiply. Now select your Archway layer, drop it to 50% and move to the right to lose the large light area. Mask if



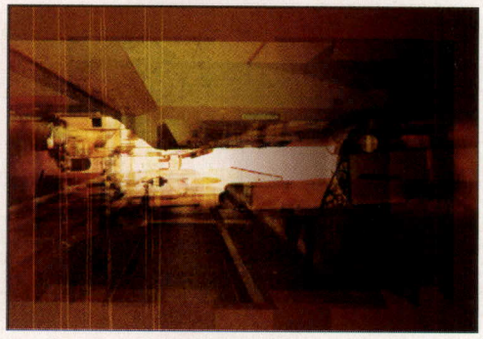
19 ADDING LINES

Again add a new layer, and select a small brush (about 3 pixels) plus a lightish yellow colour. If you click once with a brush and then click while holding the Shift key, the dots will automatically join up – hey presto, straight lines. Put a few in over the left third of the image.



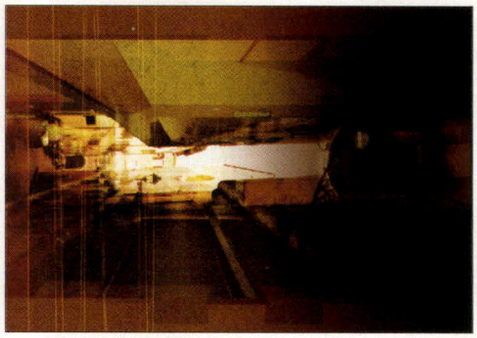
20 BLURRING THE LINES

Switch this layer to Overlay and then duplicate it. Switch the new layer to Hard Light, apply a Gaussian blur (Filter, Blur, Gaussian Blur) of about 3 pixels, and drop the layer down to 50% opacity.



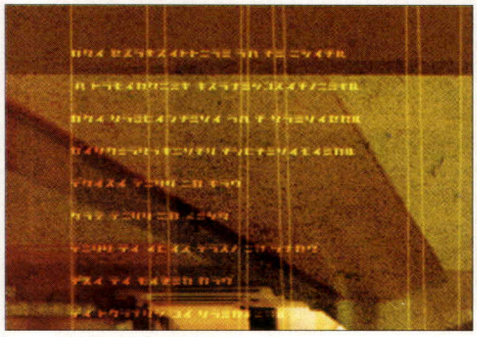
21 THIRD BORDER

Next we're going to create another border, but this time we'll attempt to follow the apparent structure in the image more closely. So create a new layer, drag out your shape, inverse the selection and fill with the same colour as your lines. Deselect and switch the layer to Colour Burn.



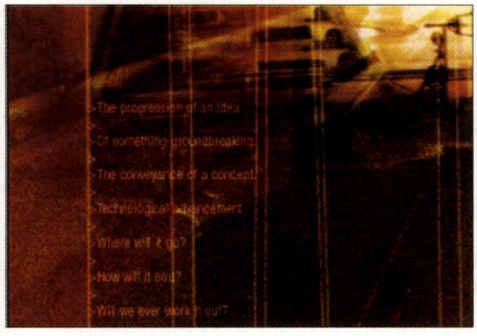
22 MORE RIGHT-HAND SIDE TWEAKING

Select your first two border layers in turn and apply a layer mask to them; again Black to Transparent. Drag a gradient in from the right-hand edge to the middle, but this time instead of a 100% opacity gradient drop it down to 60%.



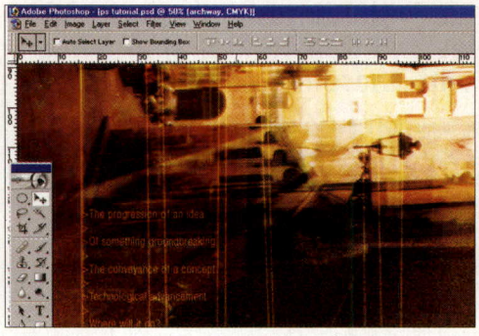
23 SOME TEXT TO FINISH

It's a good idea to add some text to your images to finish them off. Font, size and content are entirely your choice. We've chosen the Commercial Break typeface (free from www.fontfreak.com) for its graphic feel. Line this text up with your lines.



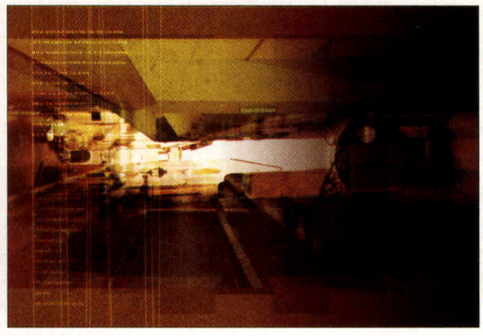
24 SOME TEXT TO FINISH – PART 2

Duplicate your Text layer by selecting the Move tool (press V) and, while dragging the Text layer, hold down the Alt key (and Shift to keep it in line). This will automatically put it on a new layer. If necessary, switch to a more legible font, and change the layer properties to Overlay.



25 SOME TEXT TO FINISH – PART 3

Finally, duplicate this text layer just to bring it out a bit more. As the duplicated layer isn't going to move, the quickest and easiest way to duplicate it is to just drag the original layer onto the New Layer icon, rather than using the Alt & drag technique.



26 FINISHED

And there you have it, one completed abstract image. It shows that computer-generated images don't have to be hugely complicated to work. It's just a matter of bringing the right elements together to get the desired effect, and with the layers and the layer properties, you've got plenty of options.

IN DETAIL: GET TO KNOW LAYERS WELL

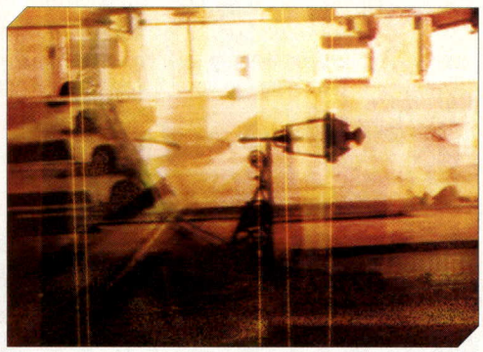
The flexibility that using layers and layer masks gives you opens up all sorts of creative possibilities

Most users of Photoshop would agree that the addition of layers was the best move the boffins at Adobe ever made. The flexibility that layers give you (don't mention the file sizes though!) is absolutely priceless. It's difficult to imagine using the program without them, and once you get the hang of layer masks as well it really does open up the possibilities. If your interests lie in creating montage images, whether it is for a Web site header or a full-on abstract piece, they are ideal.

Knowing that you're not deleting any information and that if you do overstep the mark you can just switch from black to white and bring selected elements back in, stops you from worrying, and you can just get on with being creative. After all, the program is only a tool, and shouldn't restrict your creative flow. The ability to create is the most important thing, and the layers and the layer masks let you do just what you want to.

Not only that, but layers are the greatest tool around for allowing you to mix and merge two different images into one – from simple cutouts through to advanced layer blends, the trick is pretty much the same – you place one image on top of the other, fiddle about with it, then see how it affects the image behind it. With this method, you don't have to worry for a second about what your extravagant work is doing to the image as a whole, as each layer you've created can be edited as one individual image.

■ A dark, foreboding image like this looks fine on its own, but ally it to another picture via layers and you have many more possibilities

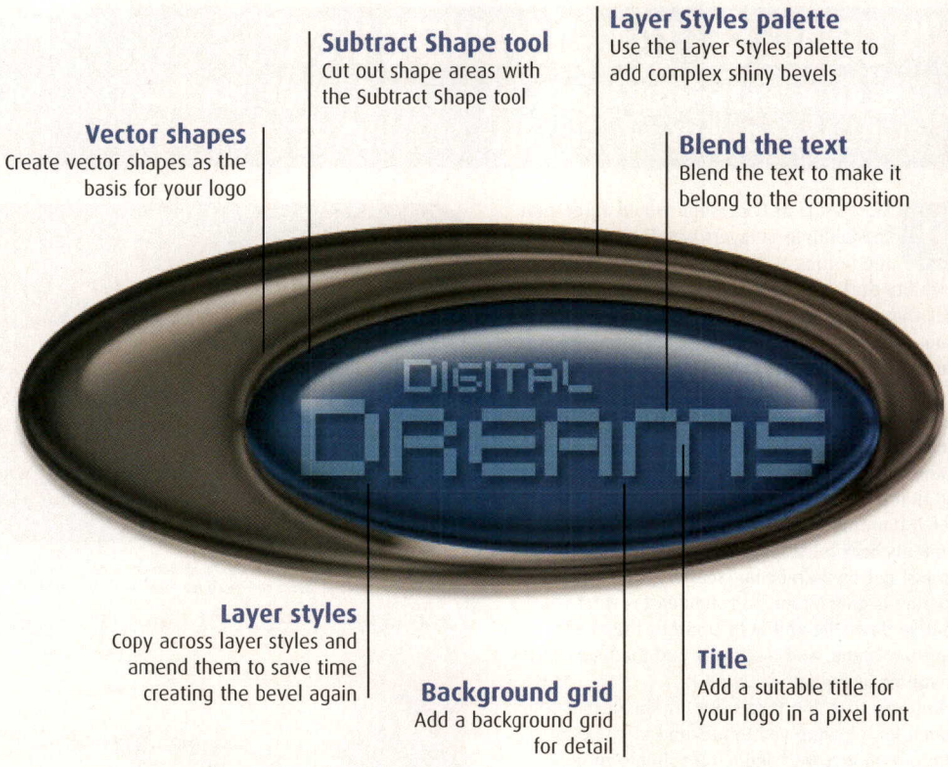


■ With a little bit of work on the top layer, you can see the effects that are possible. Change the layer blend for even more functionality

TUTORIAL: PHOTOSHOP
CREATE AMAZING IMAGES WITH LAYER STYLES

THE EXPERT: MARK SHUFFLEBOTTOM

Mark teaches on the BA Hons Interactive Media course at Bournemouth University, and has been a regular contributor to *Practical Internet* for many issues. Although Mark comes from a print background – he is a former designer of *PI* – he is now much more involved in Web design technology, and specialises in everything from Flash design through to 3D graphics and PHP.



CREATE AMAZING IMAGES WITH LAYER STYLES

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE

Learn how to get the best use out of the Layer Style palette in Photoshop

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED

15 minutes

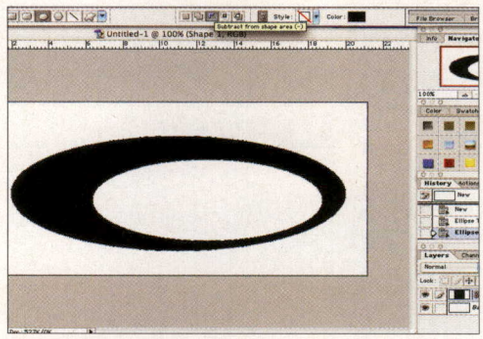
ON THE DISC

Photoshop/ Tutorial files: final.jpg, final.psd, grid.psd

Get creative with Photoshop's powerful Layer Styles and transform graphics into stunners with these metallic bevel tips

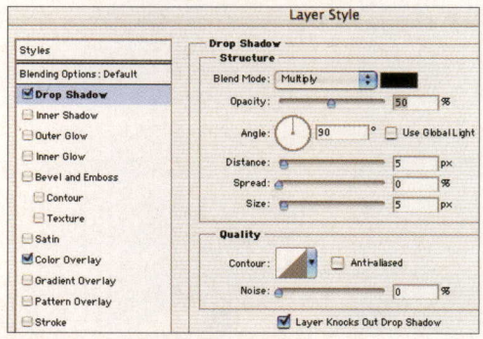
Creating logos and interface elements for your site is one of the trickiest parts of the Web-building process, but here to give you inspiration is our guide to creating ultra-shiny metallic bevel effects with the Layer Styles palette in Photoshop. This effect can be used to apply a whole plethora of interface elements from buttons to logos to give your design that metallic look.

Photoshop has long been king of image manipulation, but despite strong competition it still reigns on its throne of retouched pixel beauty, and it can't be beaten as the tool for creating interface and logo elements for your site. The secret is that styles can be copied from one layer to another, saving valuable design time, and this allows you to make minor adjustments to each layer's style to give different effects. Even greater than this is that if you click on the New Style button in the Layer Style palette, you create a whole new style which can be accessed from the Style palette and with one click applied to a layer in any other Photoshop document. ■



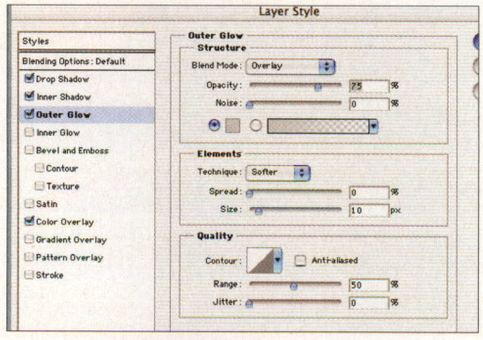
1 GETTING STARTED

Open Photoshop and create a new document 600 pixels wide by 300 pixels high. Select the Vector Shape tool and from the Shapes, choose an oval. Draw an oval on the screen as shown by the outer oval. Now select the Subtract From Shape Area tool and draw another oval inside.



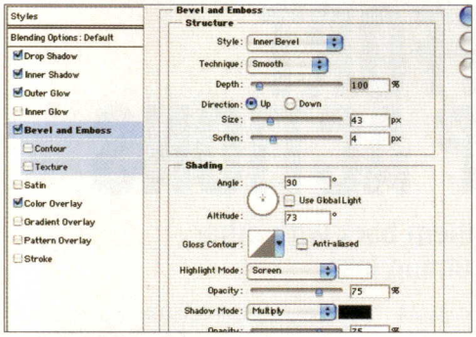
2 OVERLAYS AND SHADOWS

Double-click the layer to launch the Layer Style palette and click on the Colour Overlay category; add a grey colour and click the tickbox to turn it on. Now select Drop Shadow and change the angle to 90° with a distance of 5 and a size of 5. Again make sure the tick is selected.



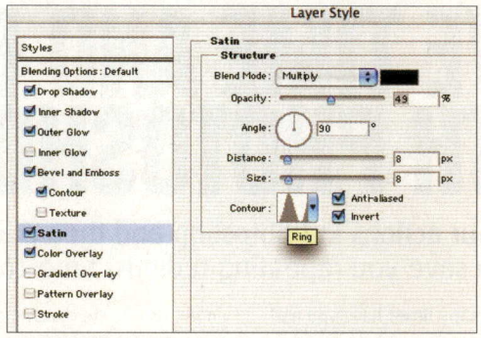
3 INNER SHADOW

Select the Inner Shadow and click the tick, change the opacity to 65% with a 95° angle, a distance of 20 and size of 21 pixels. Select the Outer Glow and click the tickbox to turn it on. Reduce the opacity to 75% with a grey colour and a size of 10 pixels.



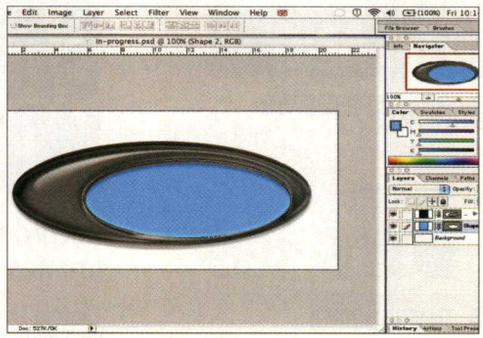
4 BEVEL AND EMBOSS

Click on Bevel and Emboss, and check the box to turn it on. Give the bevel a size of 43 with a softness of 4. Add an angle of 90ª with an altitude of 73ª, turning off the Global Light setting. Both highlight and shadow should have 75% as the opacity.



5 ADD CONTOUR AND SATIN

Turn the Contour option on and in the settings change the range to 70%, anti-aliased, then change the Contour to Gaussian. Turn the Satin settings on and change the opacity to 49%, an angle of 90ª, a distance and size of 8 pixels and the contour should be set to Ring.

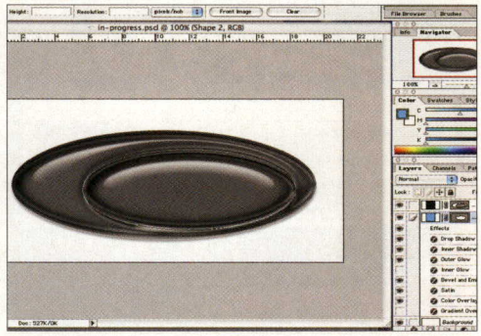


6 A NEW LAYER

Click OK and when you see your oval shape it should have a shiny metallic-looking bevel on it. Now change your foreground colour to Light Blue and draw another oval shape to fit in the hole in the centre. Move the layer behind the bevelled shape.

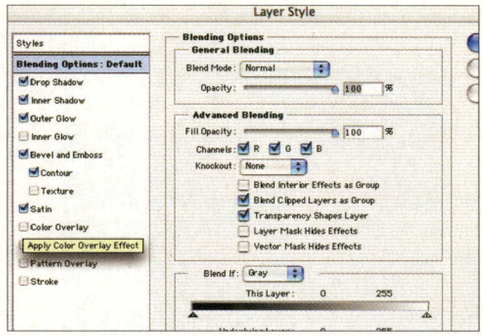
7 COPY THE STYLE

To get the bevelled effect on the blue oval, we don't want to have to repeat steps 2 to 5 all over again – instead select the bevelled layer and go to the Layers menu, choose Layer Style and Copy Layer Style to save time repeating the steps.



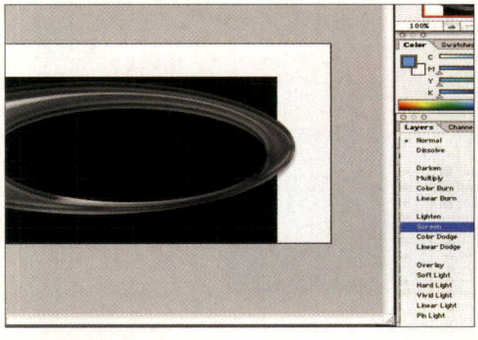
8 PASTE THE LAYER STYLE

Now select the blue oval layer and again go to the Layer menu and choose Layer Style, and this time Paste Layer Style to apply to this layer. You will see that the layer has now turned to grey – that's because there is a grey overlay, which will need to be amended.



9 REMOVE COLOURED OVERLAY

Double-click the layer to open the Layer Styles palette and click the tick next to Coloured Overlay to turn it off. If you check your oval it should be blue again. Click OK to apply and leave the Layer Styles palette, returning to your document.



10 ADD A GRID

Open the file 'grid.psd' from the cover CD and drag across the document with the Move tool into your logo document. Once in your logo, reposition the layer so that it is between the two bevelled oval layers. Now change the blending mode to Screen in the Layers palette.

11 CHANGE THE OPACITY

Turn the opacity of the grid layer right down to 30% to make it less visible. Now use the Type tool to add a heading in a suitable font. If you can find a fond that is quite pixelated, it will work well with the background grid and cause the blue oval to look like a display screen.

12 AMEND THE TEXT

Change the blending mode of your text layers to Soft Light, then double-click the text layers in turn and add a drop shadow with the opacity turned right down to 30%, so that it is very subtle. That wraps up this bevel tutorial – you can save this style and apply it to all your interface elements.

SAVE TIME AND EFFORT WITH PHOTOSHOP ACTIONS

THE EXPERT: MARK SHUFFLEBOTTOM

Mark teaches on the BA Hons Interactive Media course at Bournemouth University, and has been a regular contributor to *Practical Internet* for many issues. Although Mark comes from a print background – he is a former designer of *PI* – he is now much more involved in Web design technology, and specialises in everything from Flash design through to 3D graphics and PHP.

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Record actions and batch convert an entire folder of images

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
10 minutes

ON THE DISC
Photoshop/Tutorials:
my pictures [folder]
webpictures [folder]

SAVE TIME AND EFFORT WITH PHOTOSHOP ACTIONS

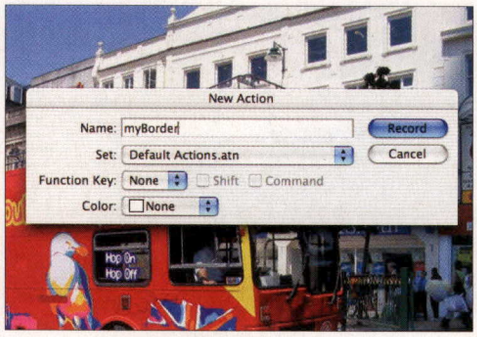
Record your actions in Photoshop and then play them back with other images to save you repeating tedious, time-consuming jobs

How many times have you had to do the same job over and over again with your images and thought to yourself 'there really has to be an easier way'? If you've ever built a Web site, chances are this has happened quite often, particularly if you've wanted every picture to have 45 degree-angled edges, and had to match the background colour to your page in the corners that are cut, and resized your image accordingly.

One of the untapped tools of Photoshop is its ability to record those tedious chores in the Action palette. All you have to do is set up a new action and Photoshop records every detail of what you do. Once recorded you can use batch processing to play back your actions on any folder of images. It'll apply all the changes while you go for a coffee, phone a friend, or better still, read the news section of *Practical Internet Web Designer*! When you return the job will be done. Easy! In the tutorial we'll add a border to some images for a Web site. ■

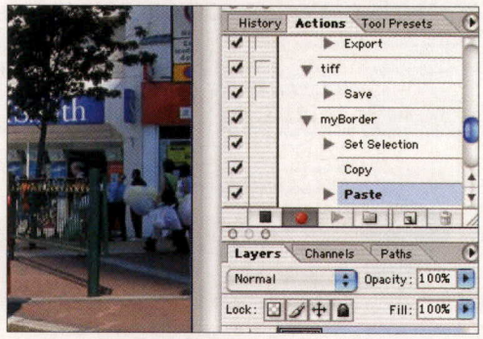
1 OPEN AN IMAGE

From the cover CD open the 'Images' folder and select one of the images to open. Here we've opened 'buses.tif', which is in the wrong format for publishing on the Web. We're also going to add a border to the image.



2 CREATE A NEW ACTION

If you cannot see the Action palette on your screen, go to the Window menu and choose Action. Now click on the Create New Action icon in the bottom right of the palette and name the new action myBorder.

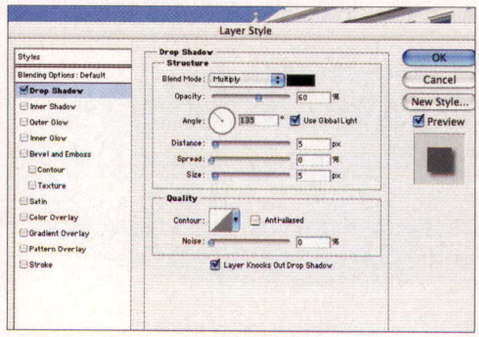


3 RECORDING SESSION

Press Ctrl & A on a PC or Apple & A on a Mac to select all, then copy and paste the image to a new layer by choosing Copy and then Paste from the Edit menu. You will notice that this has all been recording in the History.

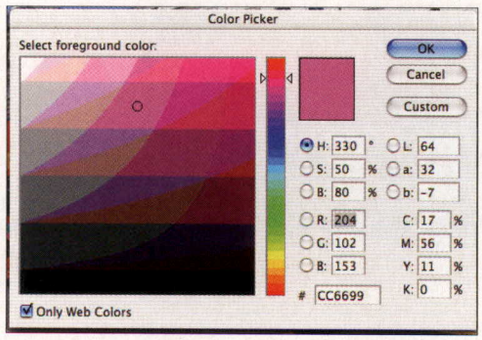
4 REDUCE THE SCALE

With layer 2 selected, go to the Edit menu and choose Transform and Scale. Hold down the Shift key and drag the bottom right-hand corner in a little towards the centre of the image. When it looks like the screenshot above, double-click to apply.



5 APPLY A DROP SHADOW

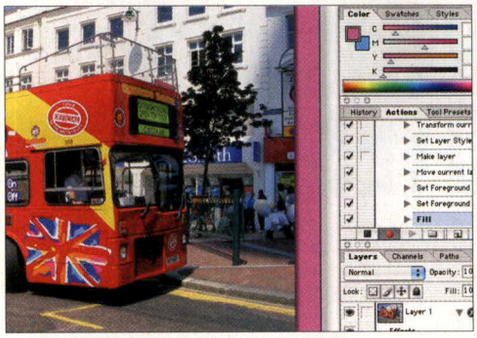
Now double-click the layer to open the Layer Style palette. Select the Drop Shadow option and click the checkbox to turn it on. Reduce the opacity of the shadow to 60% instead of the default 75%, then click OK to leave the Layer Styles.



6 ADD A LAYER

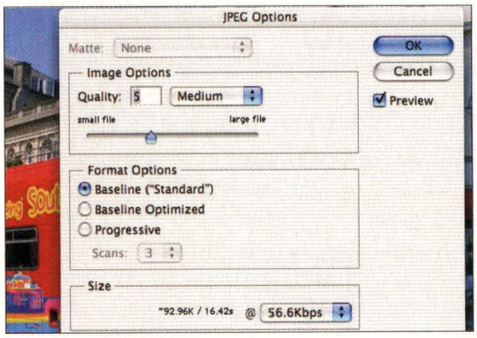
In the Layers palette, create a new layer by clicking on the New Layer icon; select this layer and drag it between layer 1 and the background. Double-click on the foreground colour to launch the Colour Picker and click on the checkbox to select Web-safe colours.

SAVE TIME AND EFFORT WITH PHOTOSHOP ACTIONS



7 CHOOSE A SUITABLE COLOUR

Now select a suitable colour that you'll be using as your background colour on your Web page. Once you have it selected click OK then use the Paint Bucket tool from the toolbar, and click anywhere on the image to fill the new layer with the selected colour.



8 SAVE AS

The document needs to be saved in the JPEG format now, ready for use on the Internet. Choose File > Save As, then create a new folder and save your image in here as a JPEG with 5 as the quality setting.

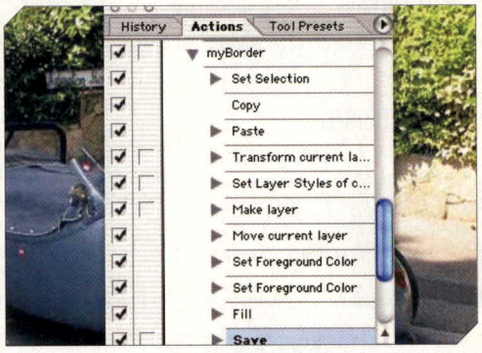
IN DETAIL: BIG UP THE BATCH PROCESS

Never underestimate the power of automation. We explore actions and batch processes...

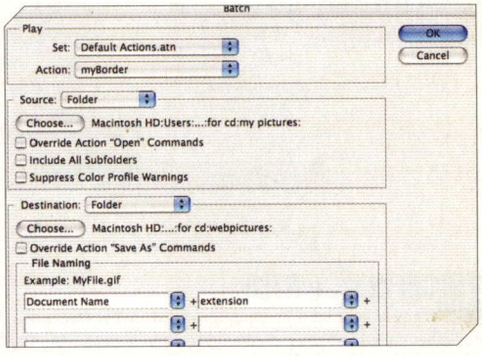
A few years ago Adobe introduced an absolutely amazing element in Photoshop. This was the ability to record actions in the Actions palette. Around the same time it also introduced the History palette which worked in a similar way but recorded every detail without you having to specify any recording, thus giving the artist the ability to go back to any given point in a composition or piece of work. This was great, as it allowed people to experiment even further with Photoshop, knowing that they could always go back and try again using a different method if it all went a bit Pete Tong.

The actions that come with Photoshop are okay – they do what they say they do – but the creative power of this tool is fully exploited when you take time to record an action that you intend to use over and over again. In this way, you can create macros of incredibly complex movements by building up various mouse clicks and functions over time.

In our tutorial we did not choose a different folder to save to in the batch process because we had already recorded this in our actions, but you can easily set it up in the batch process to save you recording it. The batch process is really useful in providing a means to apply your actions to whole folders of images in an instant. In essence, then, you should think of actions and batch processes as going hand in hand – and if you combine them well, you can really help yourself save a bundle of time. ■



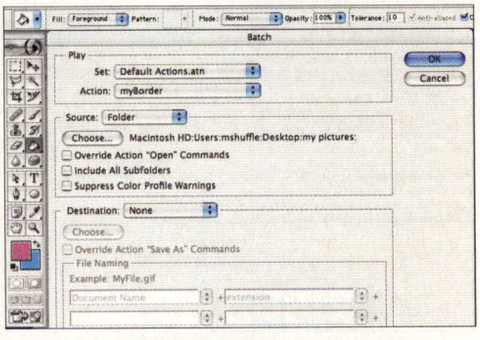
■ The Actions palette in Photoshop allows you to save macros of your movements onscreen, and therefore repeat complex functions easily



■ The good thing about batch conversion is that you can tweak folders full of files without opening up the images individually

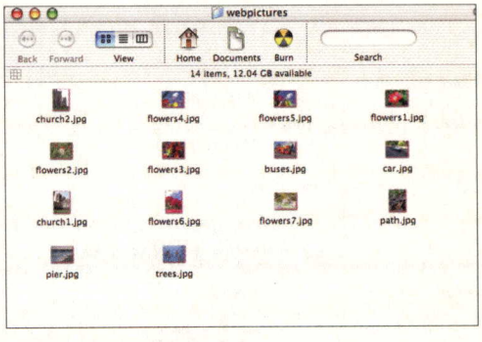
9 STOP THE ACTION

In the Action palette click on the Stop icon to stop recording your actions. Now we'll replay these actions on the entire folder of pictures, which will generate new images in the new folder ready for the Web page.



10 BATCH CONVERT

Close down the image onscreen – there is no need to save it – then go to the File menu and choose Automate > Batch. In the Source section choose the original folder of images. You can ignore the destination folder as we set this up in the Save As command.



11 HAVE A BREAK

Click OK and then go and take a break. When you return your new folder will be populated with images and the existing images will be on the screen. There's no need to save the originals unless you really want to, as you have the images for your Web page in a separate folder.

THE EXPERT: MARK SHUFFLEBOTTOM
Mark teaches on the BA Hons Interactive Media course at Bournemouth University, and has been a regular contributor to *Practical Internet* for many issues. Although Mark comes from a print background – he is a former designer of *PI* – he is now much more involved in Web design technology, and specialises in everything from Flash design through to 3D graphics and PHP.

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Create a Web gallery with Dreamweaver MX

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
20 minutes

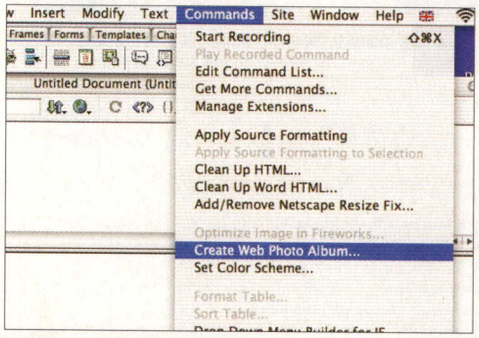
ON THE DISC
Dreamweaver/Tutorials:
finished files [folder]
start files [folder]

CREATE AN ONLINE IMAGE GALLERY IN MINUTES

Use Dreamweaver's built-in commands to turn a folder of images into a Web gallery with thumbnails

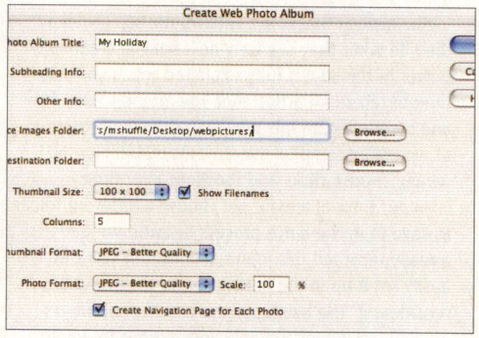
Everyone at some point has wanted to put a series of images online but found it a tedious job. Dreamweaver MX (and 2004) gets rid of the hassle through a predefined automated task, with other commands cleaning up your code, removing additional tags and combining font tags where necessary.

You do need Fireworks 4 or above to make the task work. As Dreamweaver itself doesn't have any image-editing tools, it needs to rely closely on another member of the Studio MX family. The automation process is fairly straightforward and just requires you to tell Dreamweaver where the original images are plus a new destination to place your gallery. The template isn't the most exciting but makes a good starting point, so we're going to edit the pages once the gallery has been created to fit in with the image's background colour created in the Photoshop tutorial on page 42. ■



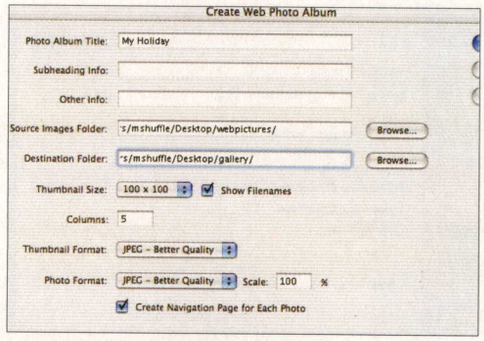
1 GETTING STARTED

On your desktop or in your Documents folder create a new folder called Gallery, then open Dreamweaver MX. To create our Web gallery we do not need to have a specific page open – just go to the Commands menu and choose Create Web Photo Album.



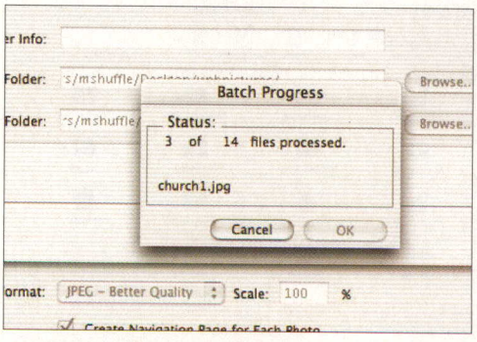
2 CHOOSE THE PICTURE

In the pop-up window that appears, give your Web gallery an appropriate title and then choose the 'webpictures' folder from the cover CD. There's no need to copy this to your computer as you can run with it straight off the CD, as Dreamweaver will copy the images into your gallery.



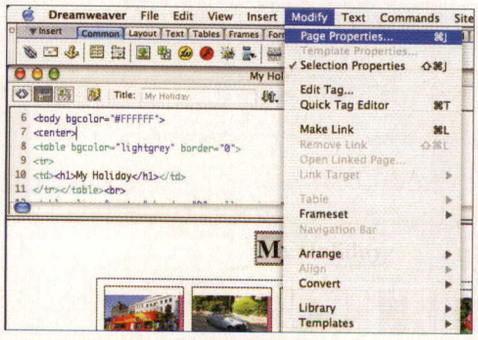
3 CHOOSE YOUR DESTINATION

In the Destination Folder settings, click on Browse and find the Gallery folder which you set up in step one, which should be in your Documents folder or desktop. Once these are in place you can press OK, then take a break for a few minutes.



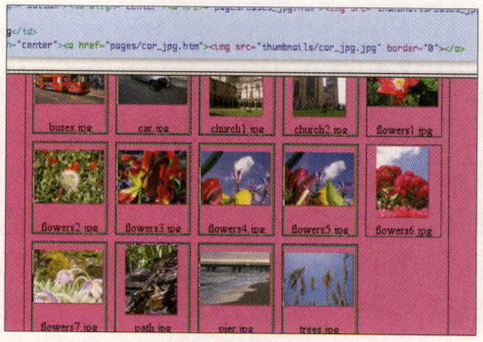
4 BATCH PROCESSING

If you stick around to watch your gallery being created, you will see that Dreamweaver relies on its sister application, Fireworks MX, in the Studio MX family, and it then begins processing the images to create a supply of thumbnail images.



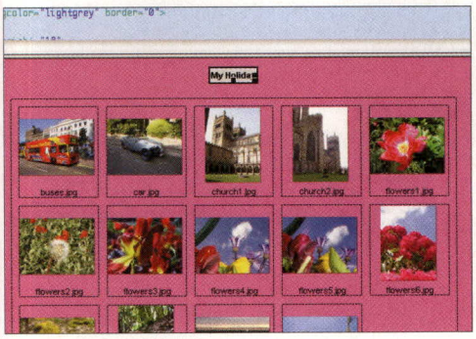
5 HERE'S THE GALLERY

Click OK on the message that tells you the gallery has been created and you will see the Menu page. It looks a bit odd, so we need to reformat the elements on the page to suit our style. Go to the Modify menu and choose Page Properties.



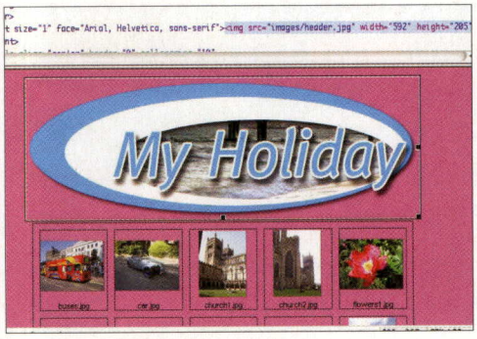
6 SELECT THE COLOUR

Click on the Background Colour square, and instead of choosing a colour from the palette select the purple edge to the images from the Web page. Click OK to return to the page. Now select all the text by pressing Ctrl & A on a PC or Apple & A on a Mac.



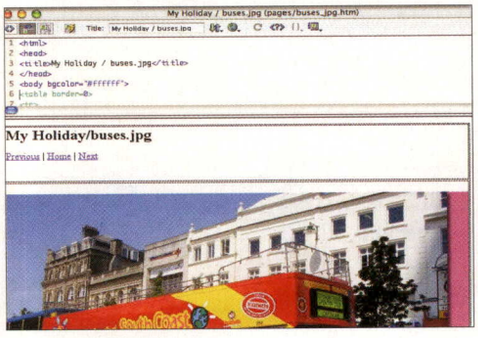
7 A NEW FORMAT

Change the text from the default font in the Properties palette to Arial and size 1. Now move to the top of the page and delete the title at the top by selecting the table that's holding it and pressing Delete on the keyboard.



8 ADD A HEADER GRAPHIC

From the cover CD copy the image header.jpg from the Tutorial folder and place it in the Images folder inside the Gallery folder. Go back to Dreamweaver MX and place your cursor at the top of the page then click the Insert Image icon. Now insert 'header.jpg' from your Images folder.



9 SAVE AND CLOSE

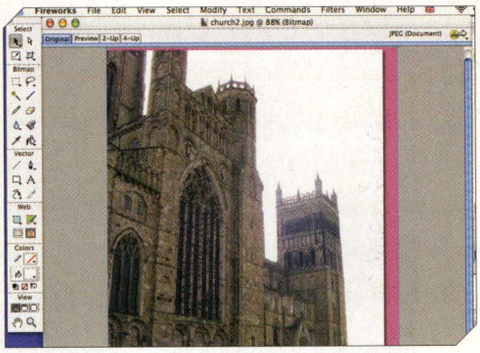
Go to the File menu and choose Save; now you can safely close down this document. We need to do exactly the same to the individual image pages, so go to the File menu and choose Open, then browse into the Pages folder inside your Gallery folder and open 'buses_jpg.htm'.

IN DETAIL: AUTOMATIC FOR THE PEOPLE

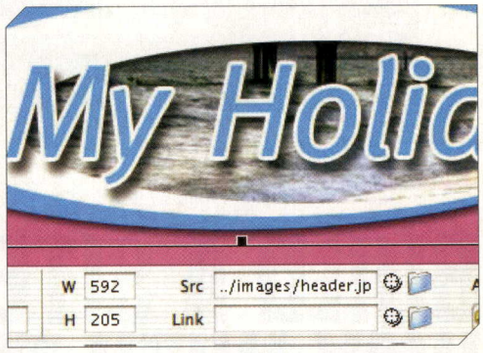
Dreamweaver needs a little help from Fireworks to edit images. Discover how to get the results you want

Dreamweaver is an excellent Web page editor. Although it doesn't have any major tools for editing images (mainly because it was never intended to be used for that purpose), the new version Dreamweaver MX 2004 does allow you to make minor image changes. Having said that, even version 2004 lacks power in the graphics department, so Dreamweaver has to use Fireworks, its sister application which is specially designed for creating Web graphics and is the ideal choice for the automated task of creating thumbnail images from master images.

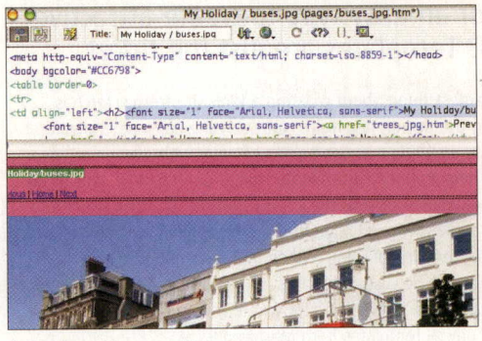
Once all the images have been created both as thumbnails and as copies of the original images, Dreamweaver arranges the gallery into a special order with all the image pages found under the Pages folder, the main pictures found under the Images folder and the thumbnails found in the Thumbnails folder. The problem arises when you want to add an image to the page as in step 11. The page is in the Pages folder and the image is in the Images folder, so this actually confuses Dreamweaver. In order to clarify this you'll need to make your path to the image look like this: ../images/header.jpg. This takes the browser down a level and into the Images folder to get the graphic – the result we want. It's not as simple as it could be, and it certainly ain't pretty, but it will solve any problems you have in updating your gallery pages in the future. ■



■ In Fireworks, you can tweak your image until you're perfectly happy with the way it looks, as befits any powerful graphics package

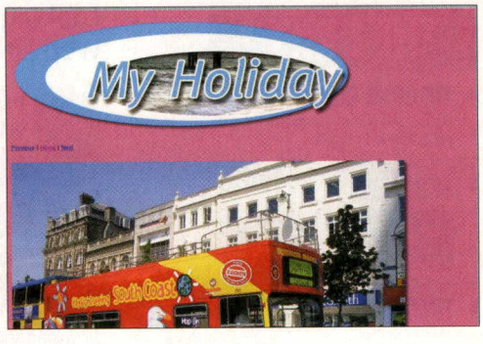


■ Back in Dreamweaver, make sure you use the double dot notation to allow the program to find your files in the correct folder



10 FORMAT THE PAGE

Go to the Modify menu, choose Page Properties and as before change the background colour to the pink on the screen. Click OK to apply then select the text and change it to Arial size 1. Select the heading at the top of the page and press Delete to remove it.



11 APPLY TO ALL PAGES

Click on the Insert Image icon and place 'header.jpg' again, then save and close your page. You can now repeat steps 10 and 11 for all the pages in your page folder to give a consistent look to your Web gallery, which Dreamweaver automatically created.

TUTORIAL: DREAMWEAVER
BUILD A SITE THE EASY WAY WITH TEMPLATES

THE EXPERT: DARREN LOCK

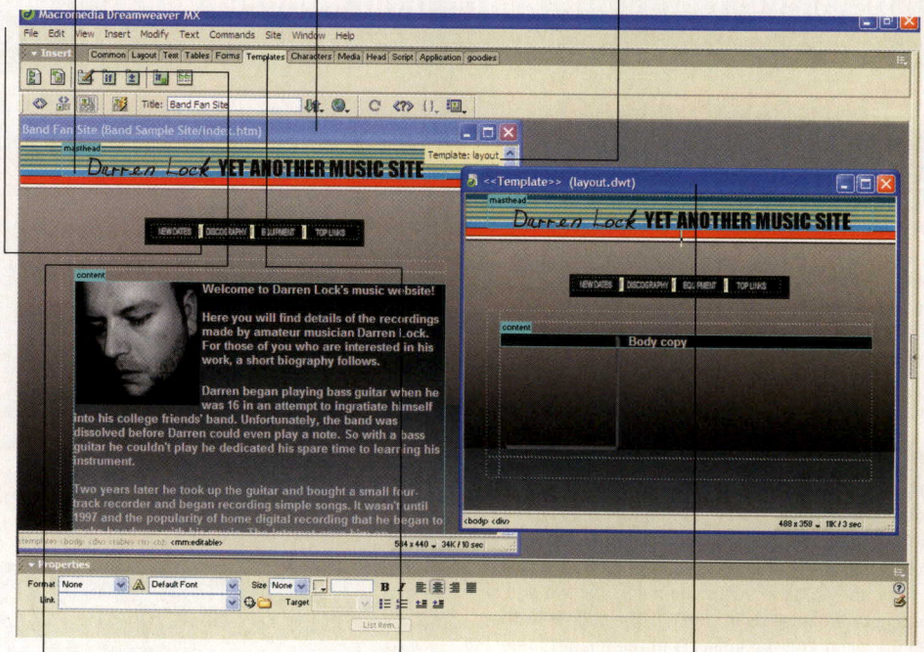
Darren is a freelance journalist who regularly contributes to some of the UK's leading technology magazines – such as *Digital Photographer* and *Practical Web Projects*. Darren writes authoritatively on a variety of Web-related subjects – from power-coding in Flash through to creating sites in Dreamweaver.

Edit at will
The blue areas of the editing window are editable areas of the template

Done and dusted
The finished Web site – the main editing window displays the final version of the page created using a template

The site foundations
The current template that was used to create this document is displayed here

No-go areas
The yellow areas of the editing window are locked areas of the template and cannot be edited



Make it up
Here are the editing tools for creating templates from scratch

Give the command
Access template commands from the template palette

Bare bones
This is the template used to create our final document

BUILD A SITE THE EASY WAY WITH TEMPLATES

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Dreate a Web site using a pre-designed template

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
15-30 minutes

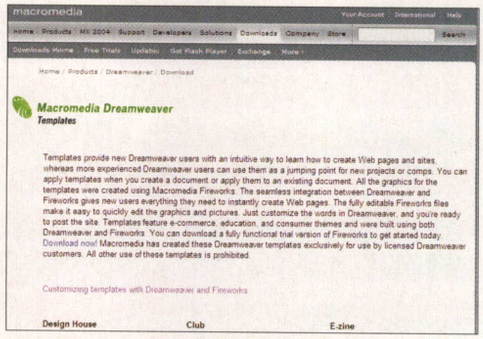
ON THE DISC
Dreamweaver/ Tutorials:
Band Sample Site [folder]
Using_Templates.html

Looking for an easy way to create attractive Web sites? Templates are just the ticket

The hardest thing about creating a Web site from scratch is getting the design just right. Not everyone has innate artistic skills, so anything that can help out is very welcome. Dreamweaver's helping hand comes in the shape of templates, which can be used as the foundation of your site.

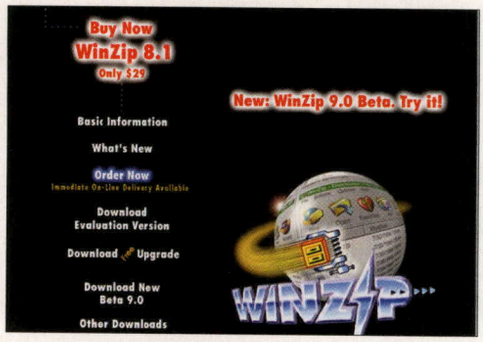
A template is a pre-designed page that can be applied to your Web site. You might not like the idea of using a page that someone else has designed, but they can be customised to suit your tastes. A number of sites provide free Dreamweaver templates for you to use and you can even download some official templates from Macromedia at **www.macromedia.com/software/dreamweaver/download/templates**. We're going to show you how to use one of these in this tutorial.

These templates are easy to download and use in a new site. We'll show you how to edit and customise Dreamweaver MX templates as well as giving you the lowdown on editable and locked regions, applying sample templates to new pages and modifying an image used in a template.



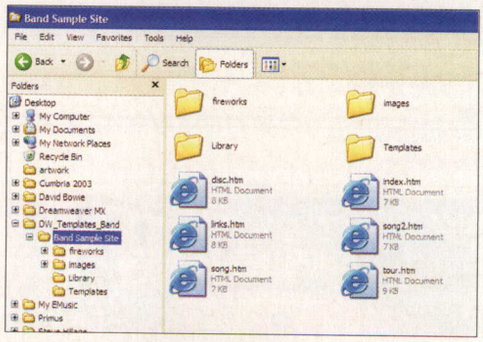
1 DOWNLOAD YOUR TEMPLATES

We are going to use a Macromedia template as the basis of this tutorial, found at **www.macromedia.com/software/dreamweaver/download/templates**. There are many different designs available, but we plumped for Band Templates to create a music-orientated Web site.



2 PREPARE YOUR FILES

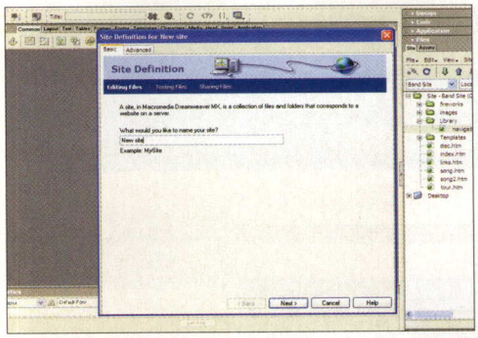
The downloaded files are compressed, so you may need to unzip them. Check out WinZip at **www.winzip.com** to download and install the latest free software. Now you can unzip the files to a directory on your hard drive.



3 UNDER INVESTIGATION

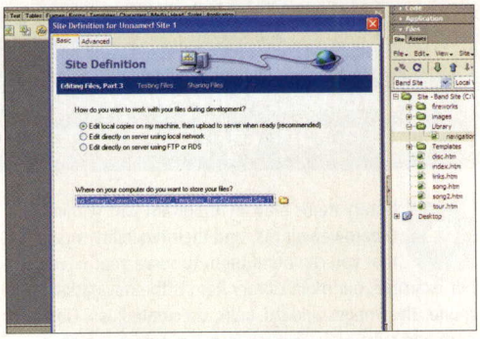
Once you've unzipped the files, have a look around and see what you've downloaded. All the template files are located in the Templates folder while all the sample pages created using these templates are located in the initial folder. All the graphic files are located in the Images folder.

TUTORIAL: DREAMWEAVER
BUILD A SITE THE EASY WAY WITH TEMPLATES



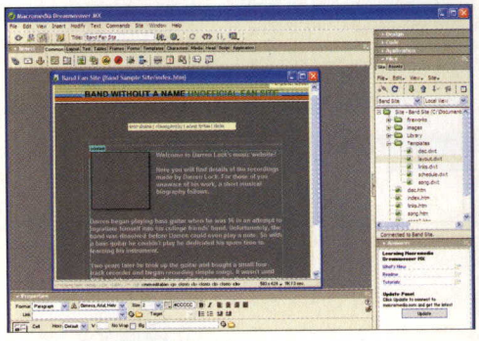
4 SETTING UP YOUR SITE

Now you can drag the template files into your Web site and use them. If you haven't got a site, use the Files panel to create a new site from scratch. To do this, click on Site > New Site and a Web wizard will lead you through the whole process.



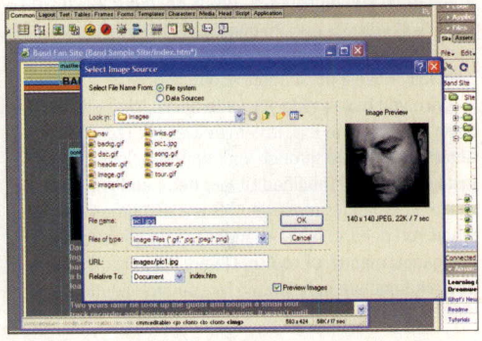
5 GET TO THE TEMPLATES

With the Site Definition wizard running, name your site, decide what server technology you are going to use and then lead the wizard to the folder on your drive where you intend to save your Web site (ideally with the pre-loaded template files already saved there).



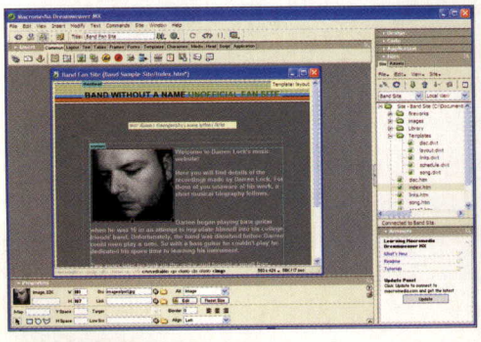
6 START CREATING

With the site set up and ready to use the templates, you can begin to edit pages. In our example, we used the demo pages that came with the template pack. We began with the index page and typed our new text into the editable regions of the page.



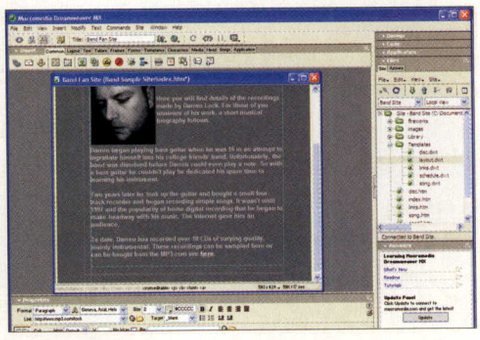
7 MAKING CHANGES

While the text areas can be easily edited, changing the images used on the page takes a little more effort. Just double-click on the image areas and you will be presented with the Select Image Source menu. You can now lead the browser menu to a suitable image on your hard drive.



8 RESIZING GRAPHICS

Once you have selected the correct image, it will be dropped into the image place holder and a copy of the graphic will be saved in your site directory. If the image is too big or too small for the template, just select it with your mouse and change it to the correct size.



9 MAKING LINKS

To add a hyperlink within your body text, you need to select the element or piece of text that you want to associate the URL with. In the Properties menu at the foot of the screen, type in the full URL of the hyperlink and then press Return.

GEEK SPEAK

TEMPLATE

A file or style sheet that defines the layout of a document. Fonts, colours and the layout are already predefined, so the user just has to enter their information in the blank, editable regions.

LIBRARY

In Dreamweaver MX, page elements that are used over a number of Web pages can be saved as a separate entity in the Library. These items are uneditable on the Web page and can only be modified via the Library.

GIF

Graphics Interchange Format, a graphics format that is often used in Web design. With its compact file size and its ability to support transparency, it is often used to create logos and backgrounds in Web pages.

BOOKMARKS

SNAKEYE WEB TEMPLATES

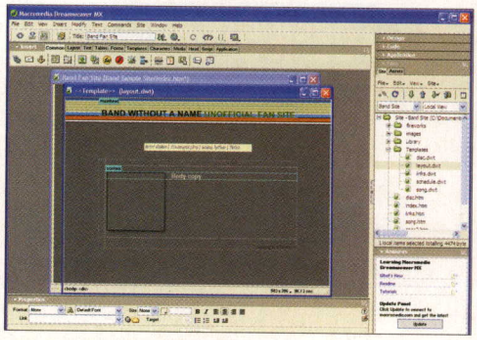
www.snakeyewebtemplates.com

Lots of free templates are here for the taking, with the option of splashing out for some professional templates, should you feel so inclined. All of the graphics are included in the template folder, leaving you free to customise to your heart's content.

EXPERT ADVICE

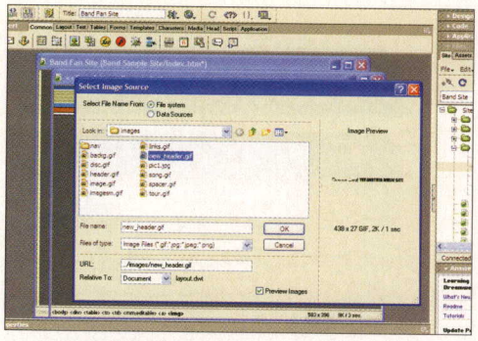
ABOUT EDITABLE REGIONS

When you edit your template you can make changes to the editable and locked regions. Both regions are highlighted, the locked areas are yellow and the editable areas are blue. To add a new editable region, right-click on your template and select New Editable Region (CTRL & SHIFT & V). When the New Editable Region menu appears, you will be asked to name the area and it will appear in your template. You can now move the editable region around the template and enter your own demo text, which will appear whenever you use the template to create a new Web page.



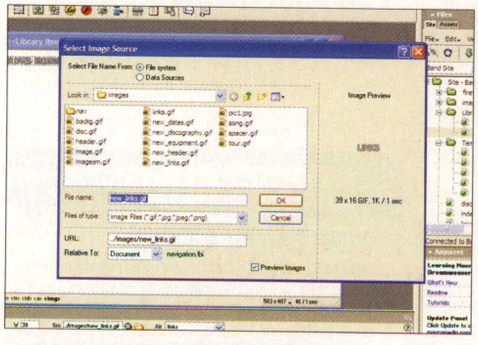
10 CHANGING GRAPHICS

In our example, we have altered the image at the top of the screen and made some small tweaks to the overall design. To change the main graphic, we designed a new logo in our image-editing program and pointed Dreamweaver MX to the new image.



11 ALL CHANGE

However, because the logo at the top of the screen is in an editable area, you have to change every instance of the graphic in each HTML file. If you make an adjustment to one of the elements that uses a library item, this change will be passed on across the site.



12 MODIFYING LIBRARY ITEMS

The navigation bar in our template is a locked library item. To change it, open the library file and right-click on the various graphical elements that make up the navigation bar and select Source File from the drop-down menu. Now direct Dreamweaver to the new menu items.

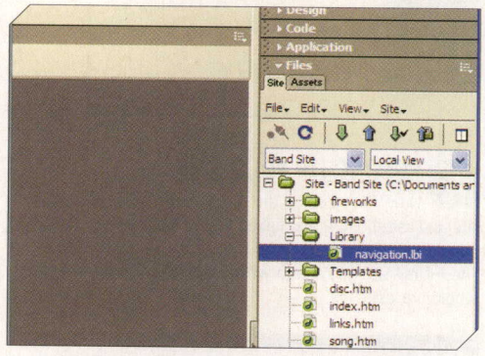
IN DETAIL: MODIFYING A LIBRARY ITEM

Implement site-wide changes quickly and easily by modifying Library items

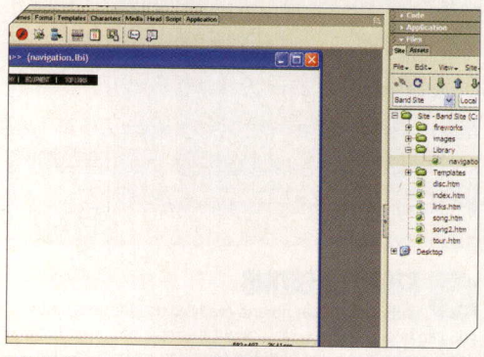
Library items play an important part within Dreamweaver MX, and their flexibility means that you can bend them to serve your needs. In our example, our main Library item is the navigation menu. The images and the links are created as a Library item and exist as a separate element, which can appear in all the pages. The great thing about Library items is that when you modify them, all the changes are passed onto all the documents which use that item.

To tweak your Library items, use the File menu to the right of the screen to navigate to the Library item you want to modify. Now click on this item and it will open up in the main editing window. This is the place where you can select and change the images used to make the element, change the target URLs from any hyperlinks and generally have a good fiddle about.

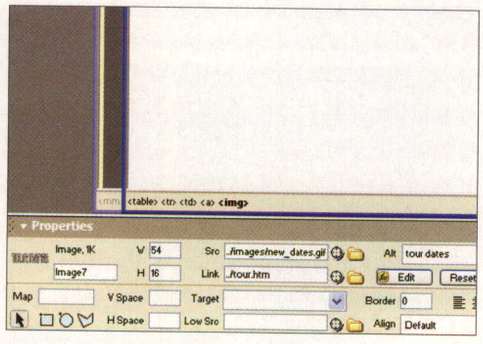
Once you have made your alterations, click on File > Save. Having done this, Dreamweaver MX (2004) will automatically scan through your Web site, looking for instances of your modified Library item, and will then make any changes required. This is a real time-saver for when you need to make changes to hyperlinks and navigation menus. Of course, Library items can be very powerful and are only limited by your imagination. ■



■ Altering Library items means that you can quickly make changes across the whole of your site with very little effort

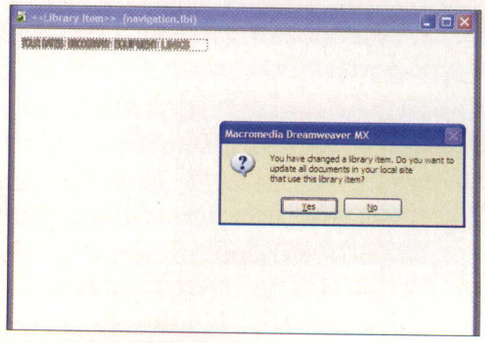


■ Navigation menus are something that you may need to change as you add new content, and it's easy with Library items



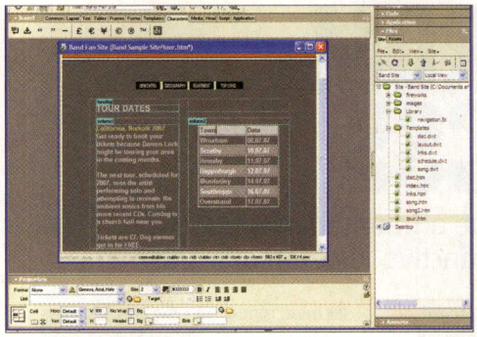
13 MORE CHANGES

Not only can you make changes to the graphics, but you can also change the URL link properties and target frames. To do this, select each section of the menu and type in the new URL in the Link field in the Properties frame at the bottom of the screen.



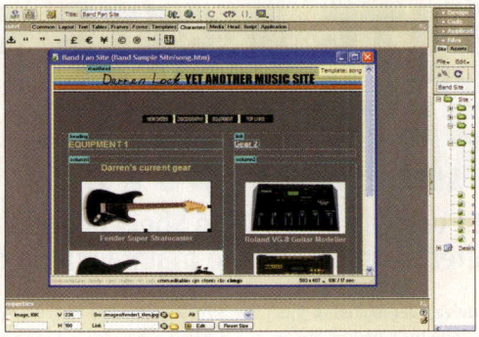
14 SAVE THE LIBRARY

With the new navigation bar library complete, select File > Save All to preserve the changes. Once the updated library item has been saved, Dreamweaver MX asks whether or not you want to roll out the changes across all the templates/pages in your site. We selected Yes.



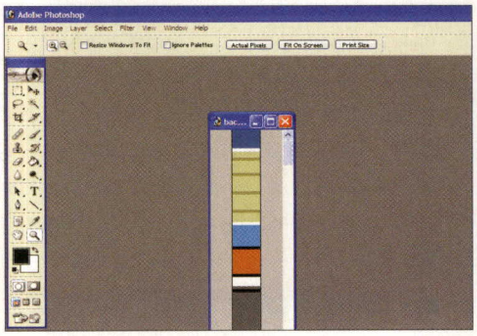
15 OTHER PAGES

With the basic design customised, we decided to go through the template pages and make alterations to all of them, adding our own text and graphics. This is probably the most time-consuming aspect of using template files – sitting down and writing your own content!



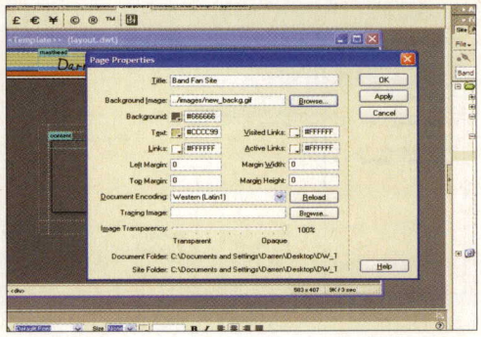
16 THE HARD WORK

When using templates, it is really easy to drag and drop graphics straight onto the page and type in text captions underneath. Whenever you do this, Dreamweaver MX automatically asks you where to save a copy of the image you are using in the Web site folder.



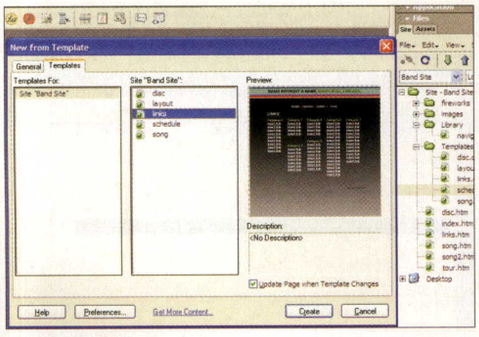
17 IN THE BACKGROUND

The template we are using as the basis of this project uses a small GIF image to create the striped header and grey background. To implement this into a Web site, enter each template and modify it accordingly with the new background image details.



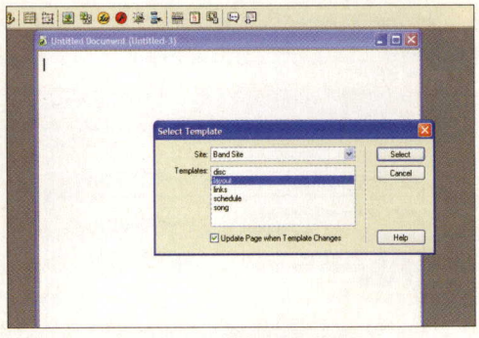
18 BACK TO FRONT

To add the new background, open each template file from the File menu and right-click on the main window. Select the Page Properties menu, alter the Background Image information and let Dreamweaver automatically update all related HTML pages that use the templates.



19 NEW PAGES

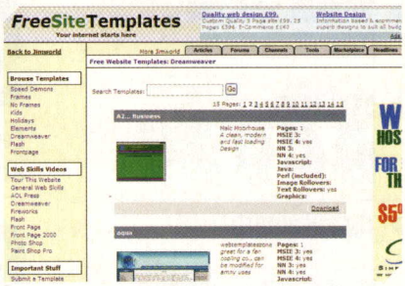
But what do you do when you want to add a new page to your Web site? A good way is to create a new page by clicking File > New and then selecting the template you want from the Template menu. Once you've done this, click on the Create button.



20 APPLYING A TEMPLATE

If you have already created a page but forgotten to use a template, don't fear. You can still apply a template. Just click Modify > Templates > Apply Template To Page. You will be presented with a list of current templates used in your site to select from.

BOOKMARKS



FREESITE TEMPLATES
freesitetemplates.com

Have an easy life and pay a visit to this site. There are over 15 pages of free downloadable templates for Dreamweaver available, as well as templates for other popular applications. You can also preview the designs before downloading – a godsend!

SMARTWEBBY
www.smartwebby.com/web_site_design/dreamweaver_template.asp

If you are looking for more information about Dreamweaver templates and want to learn more about using these tools, check out this link as it gives you a gentle introduction to the wonderful world of templates.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

Hopefully you have learnt something from this brief introduction to Dreamweaver MX templates. If you really want to get the most from Dreamweaver and templates, then we suggest that you have a good look around at some of the templates that are available. Spend some time to get an idea for style and content, and don't be afraid to have a look at the code and get an idea of how these templates were put together. Once you've use these templates to create a few demo sites, you'll soon get the idea of how to create good-looking, easily editable sites using Dreamweaver.

TUTORIAL: DREAMWEAVER
CREATE A SITE FROM SCRATCH WITH CSS

THE EXPERT: MARK BILLEN

Mark studied Software Engineering and Management at Bournemouth University for four years, a course which saw him tackle heavyweight languages like Java and JavaScript, and also develop his already burgeoning experience in HTML and CSS. Allied to this, Mark has also been a keen artist for many years, and likes nothing more than to create stunning pieces of digital art.

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Design a site using CSS with Dreamweaver MX 2004

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
30 minutes

ON THE DISC
Dreamweaver/Tutorials: index.html, sitestyles.css & images

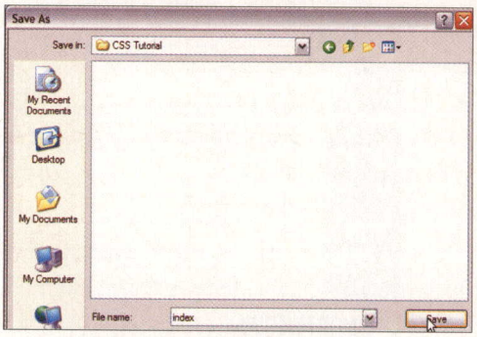
PART ONE

CREATE A SITE FROM SCRATCH WITH CSS

Learning to use Cascading Style Sheets needn't be a traumatic experience, and can offer huge benefits to maintaining a distinctive look for your site

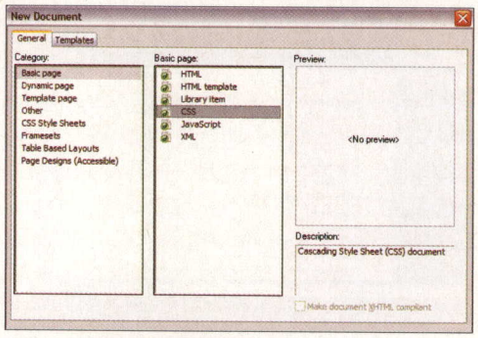
If you've ever looked at the source code for a typical site or page, you're likely to have been confronted with masses of HTML. This is often compounded by every element tag containing style properties for things like text and colour. Not only does this extra info clutter the code space and increase the size of your page files, it can also make updating your site's design a nightmare. To change a font, for example, would require editing every tag it appears in – but CSS provides a far more sensible solution.

Cascading Style Sheets are used to extract all this formatting from your pages and redefine the tags you use. This allows far more control over the way browsers render pages and will apply to all elements across a site. Style sheets are also easier to edit and exchange, and Dreamweaver MX 2004 comes with unrivalled CSS support. Over this two-part tutorial we'll explore all the necessary features as we develop a page from scratch. ■



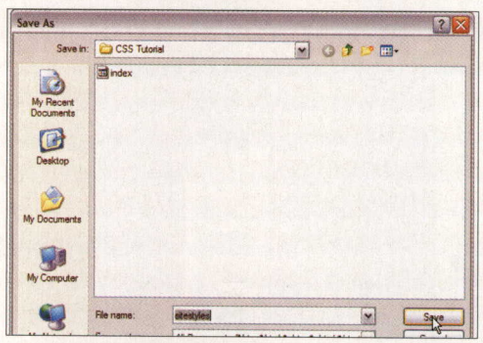
1 GETTING STARTED

Create a new blank HTML document and begin by saving the page so that we can go on to attach a new style sheet. Click File and Save As to open the dialog, and locate where you want the document stored before naming it and clicking the Save button.



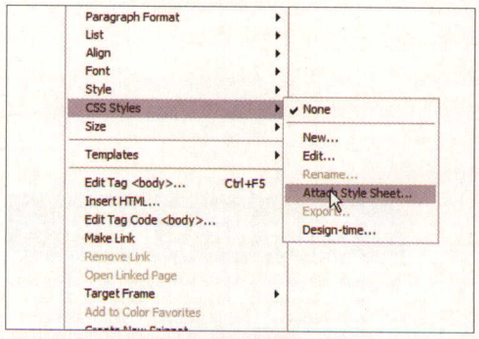
2 NEW STYLE SHEET

Next, open a blank CSS by clicking New on the File menu. You'll then see the new document dialog where you can select CSS from the Basic Page list, before clicking the Create button. An unnamed style sheet will be displayed within the main window.



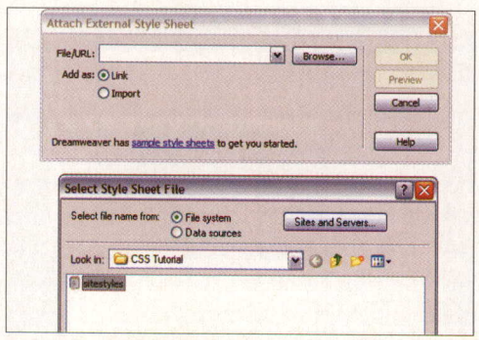
3 SAVE OUR CSS

It's important to save the new blank style sheet, as we did with the main page, before we put the two together. The HTML will have a line inserted referencing the external file, so do exactly as you did before, giving the CSS an appropriate name.



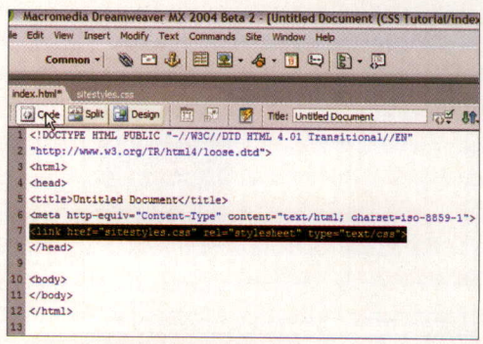
4 MAKE AN ATTACHMENT

Switch to the blank HTML page in the main editing window by clicking the corresponding tab in the top left corner. Click the white space with the right mouse button, and on the pop-up menu follow the arrow from CSS Styles to select Attach Style Sheet.



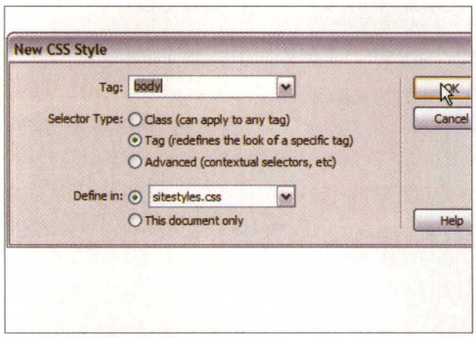
5 FIND YOUR SHEET

A prompt will appear asking for you to locate the saved CSS file. Click the Browse button to navigate to where the sheet is stored, before selecting and hitting OK. You can then confirm your selection by again clicking OK on return to the original prompt.



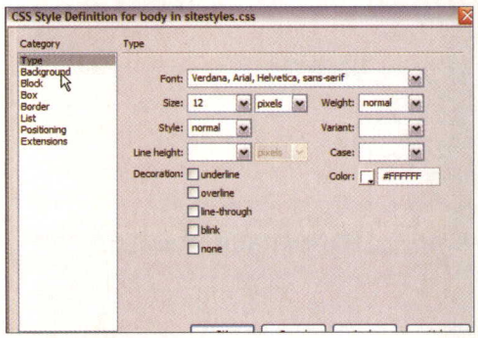
6 EVERYTHING LINKED

Open the page code by clicking the Code button on the bar above. You'll notice a <link> tag on the seventh line that sets up a reference to our CSS file. This can later be added to additional pages to adopt the same styles defined within. Click the Design button to continue.



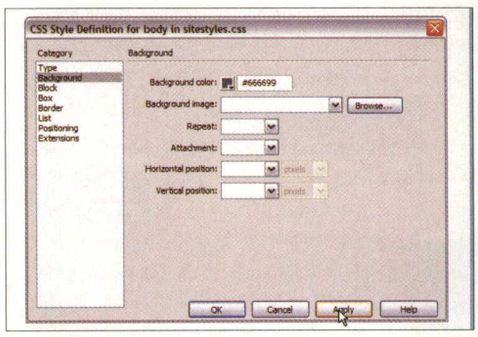
7 NEW PAGE STYLES

Begin adding classes by again visiting the CSS Styles menu via the right mouse button. Select New from the submenu to view the New CSS Style box. Here we want to format our page by redefining the body tag, so select the Tag radio button and find body in the list above.



8 DEFINING MOMENTS

The Definition wizard is the same for all elements you want to specify styles for. The first category group, Type, allows you to set font family, text colour, the size in various measurements, weight and decoration. Set these accordingly and then move on by clicking Background.



9 IN THE BACKGROUND

Here we only want to set the first parameter, Background Color, to #666699. However, you'll see that this is where you can specify a background image to tile and position. This is important to remember when adding images into table cells, but for now click Apply.

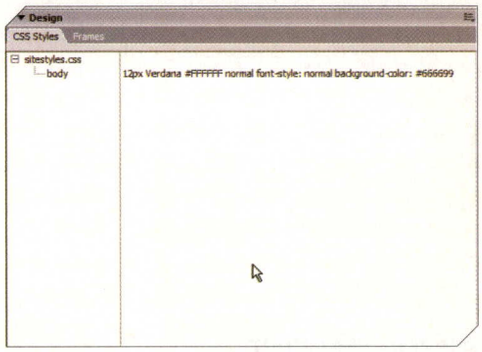
IN DETAIL: PANEL GROUPS

Gain direct access to most areas of your project quickly and easily with this function

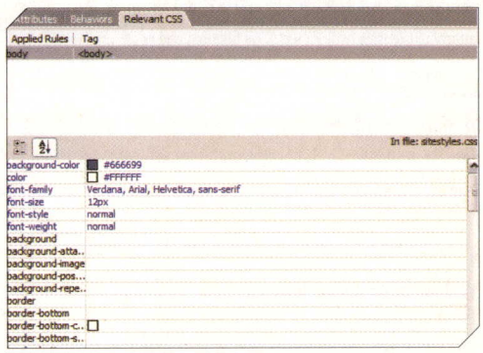
If you're already familiar with Dreamweaver you probably appreciate the many ways it allows you to access its features. Although surprisingly clutter-free, the interface is crammed full of buttons, menus and toolbars for you to use. This interface design has been developed to let you access all of your most commonly used tools and functions much more easily, and therefore speed up your working process within Dreamweaver.

Perhaps the most powerful element is the column situated down the right side of the screen, which is where the Panel Groups are located. These allow you to gain instant access to most areas of your project. By clicking the Design tab you can view all the classes inside attached style sheets under CSS Styles. Here you can profile what has been defined along with a list of properties like font, sizing and colour. It's also possible to leap to classes you wish to edit, add any new ones or delete with the small buttons below.

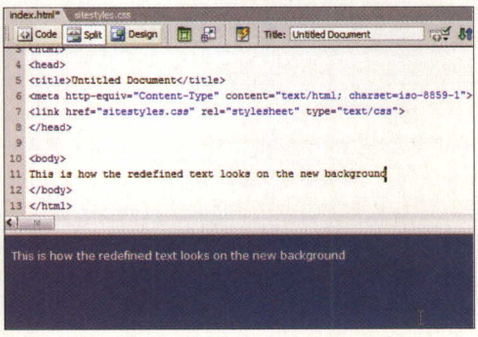
Similarly, you can gain direct access to class properties by opening up the Tag panel and viewing the relevant CSS tab. All those you have declared for a specified tag like <body> are highlighted in blue for rapid reference or alteration. Suitable values can even just be entered straight into the many boxes to add formatting as you like, although be aware that few will apply to every page element. ■



■ **The CSS Panel Group in Dreamweaver lists all fhe classes within the style sheet you are currently working on**

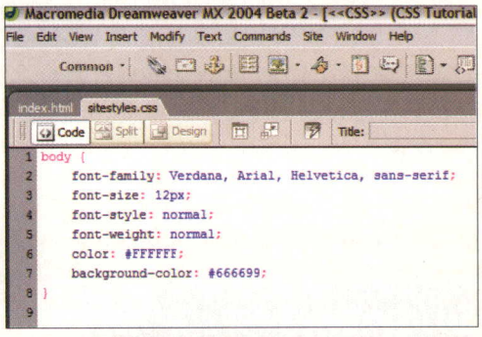


■ **Manipulate the properties of your style sheet classes directly through this section of the Panel Group**



10 LOOK, NO HTML

With the styles added and applied, you should see the page background change colour. Try typing an example line of text, and you'll notice the new text formatting has taken effect. View the page and code combined by clicking the Split button and see that the <body> tag remains unchanged.



11 STYLISH AND CLASSY

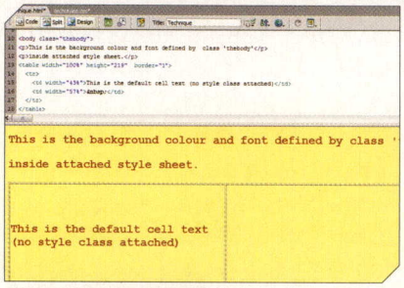
Look again at the code for the style sheet by selecting its tab. We only have one class within it so far, which is used to override the default characteristics of the <body> tag. Classes are defined by a name with curly brackets used to hold each style property and their corresponding values.

TUTORIAL: DREAMWEAVER
CREATE A SITE FROM SCRATCH WITH CSS

TECHNIQUE

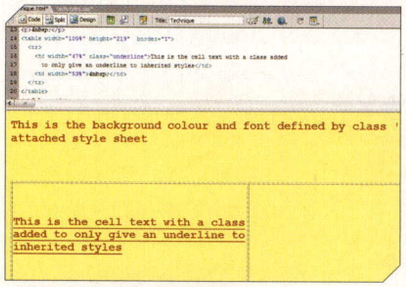
WORKING WITH STYLE

CSS and HTML both use a top-down approach to the way element styles are applied throughout a page. We see how this hierarchical structure works and how it can help you avoid pitfalls during the design process.



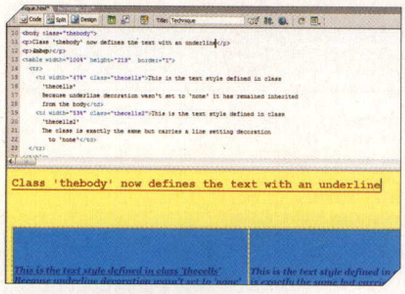
1 STYLE INHERITANCE

Here is a basic document attached to a new style sheet. A new class, thebody, has been defined and applied to the <body> tag, instigating the styles shown. Note that the inserted table has no HTML formatting or class style attached, but inherits from the page element above.



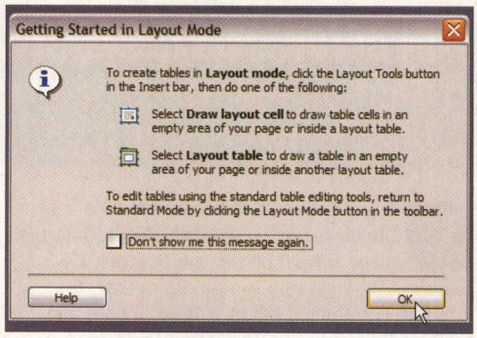
2 EXTENDING STYLES

Theoretically this type of inheritance lets you extend formatting styles by adding or changing the properties you desire. Here a new class, underline, has been attached to the first cell to add the necessary decoration. All font styles, size and colour remain inherited.



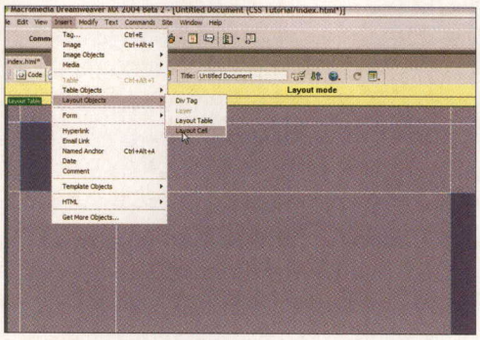
3 CUTTING CORNERS

It isn't advisable to shortcut your design with inheritance rules. Different browsers have different ways of interpreting them, so you may get unwanted results – rogue styles can filter through to nested elements if you fail to redefine all basic styles in each class.



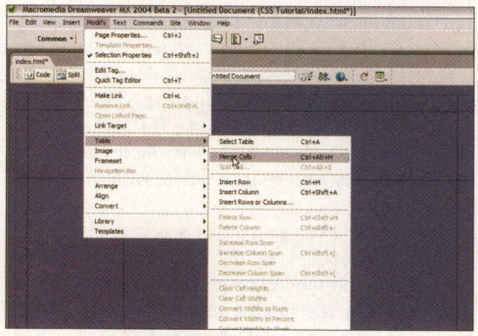
12 LAYOUT MODE

To mock up a basic template for the page we'll draw a table layout with layers. Start by clicking the green folder-like button next to the Design view toggle. This initiates Layout Mode, which should then be displayed above the page. Click OK on the prompt to continue.



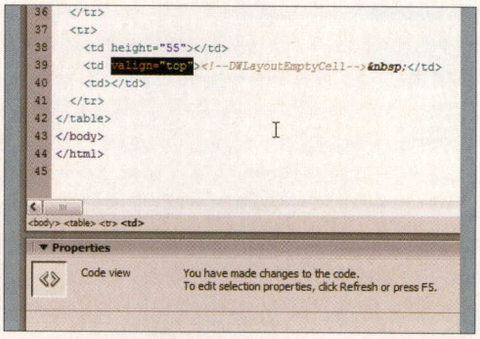
13 DRAW CELLS

To quickly draw out a table layout click Insert on the main menu and then Layout Objects. You should then select Layout Cell and begin using the cursor to draw boxes onto the page. Try to group them together and follow the basic structure shown.



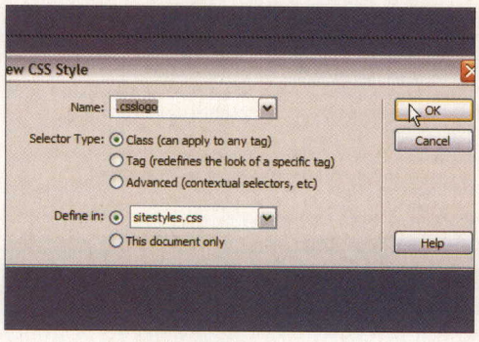
14 FINISHED TABLE

Toggle out of Layout mode once finished and resize or tweak the new table accordingly. Essentially we want a left-side margin for links and logos, with a main content cell for text. We will also add a banner image, and the thin boxes at the bottom will hold navigation links.



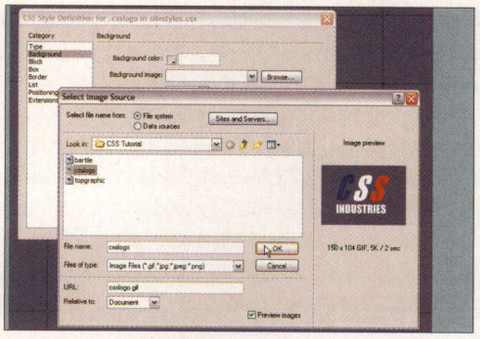
15 CODE RIPPING

View the code for the page once again to amend the code inserted for the new table. We will leave the size formatting for now, although this should ideally go into the CSS, but do delete all references to style such as Align because these are unnecessary.



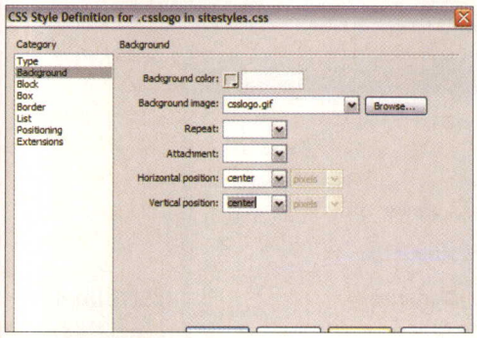
16 IMAGE CONSCIOUS

No page is complete without images, but instead of inserting them, let's redefine the <td> tags that will contain them. Use the right button menu to define a new CSS class as before, but in the prompt pick the first option under Selector Type and name it '.csslogo' before clicking OK.



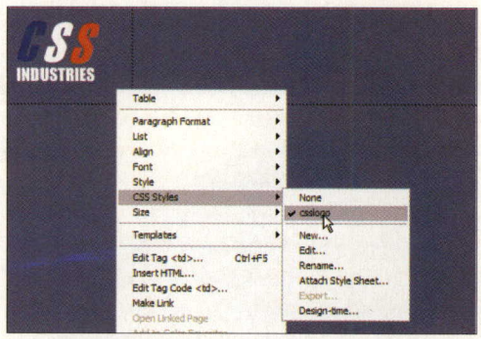
17 NEW BACKGROUND

In the Styles Definition dialog we only want to define a background style for the class, so visit the Background category. Under Background Image click the Browse button to locate the 'csslogo.gif' file. Select this and continue by clicking OK.



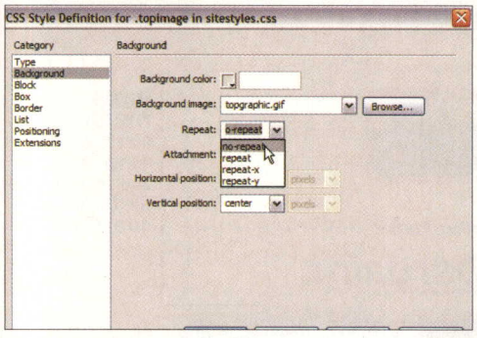
18 INTO POSITION

Next, set the image's position in the cell by selecting the Centre value from the Horizontal and Vertical boxes. This will sit the logo nicely in place, so confirm the settings by clicking Apply. You shouldn't notice any change to the page as yet, because we must first attach the new class.



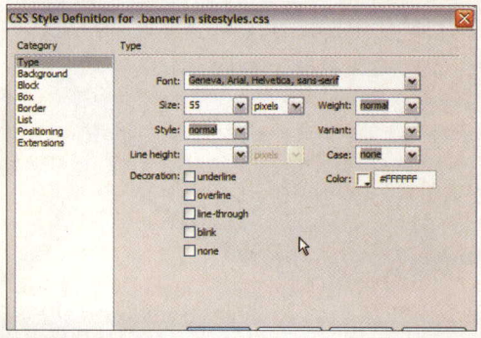
19 ALL TAGGED UP

Right-click the logo cell and view the CSS Styles menu. In the following list of options you'll notice that the new class name has been added underneath None. Click it to select, and the styles for that class will be attached to the <td> tag of the specified cell, inserting the logo.



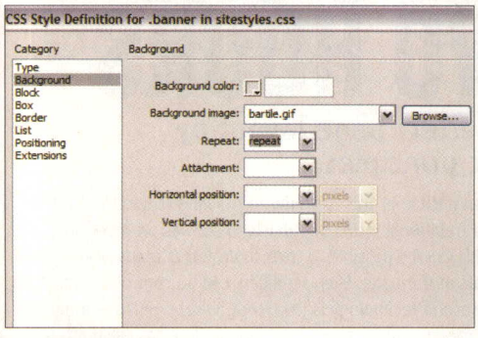
20 REPEAT YOURSELF

Add a second image in the top right cell in exactly the same way. Define a new class called '.topimage' and set topgraphic.gif as the background image. Position as before, but because the image is not an exact fit select No-repeat under the Repeat option. This prevents any tiling.



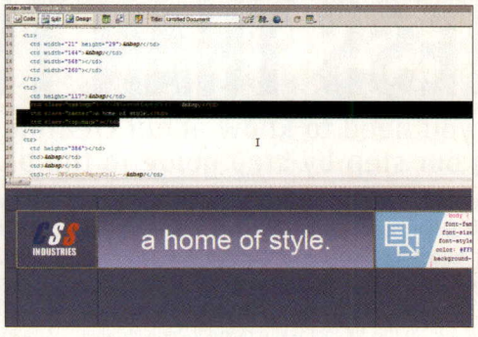
21 BANNER TEXT

In the top banner we want to add a simple text slogan above a gradient background. With the default text entered, create another new .banner class. Select category Type to change the font, and set the size to 55 pixels and colour to white.



22 TILING GRADIENT

Move on to the Background category and use Browse to find the bartile.gif image. This time we want this simple texture to tile itself beneath the line of text, so select Repeat in the box below to make sure. Confirm the style changes by clicking Apply.



23 FINISHED BANNER

Complete the banner by attaching the new class to the middle cell, and its background and text will change. With the page top complete check the code for the <td> tags and notice the 'class=' properties added. Similar techniques will be used to add text content and links next time.

GEEK SPEAK

CSS

Cascading Style Sheets are a feature of HTML that give designers more power and flexibility over site design. Native page tags can be redefined to adopt specific and precise styles that are not normally achievable, while totally new 'classes' can be attached to any element. This implies a far more convenient method for unifying a look across many pages, while updating formatting styles is easier. Importantly, CSS files can be stored separately and referenced externally by a page, making a collection of styles instantly interchangeable. Termed as 'cascading' for the ability to attach multiple sheets to a single page, CSS was developed by W3C and the evolving specification remains not wholly supported by all browsers.

CLASSES

CSS classes are used to hold all formatting properties within a style sheet. They either adopt the same name as the tag they are redefining, such as 'body', or are given a generic reference that can be used by any element. The properties they contain such as those for defining font, position or colour are then used to instruct the browser to override default styles.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

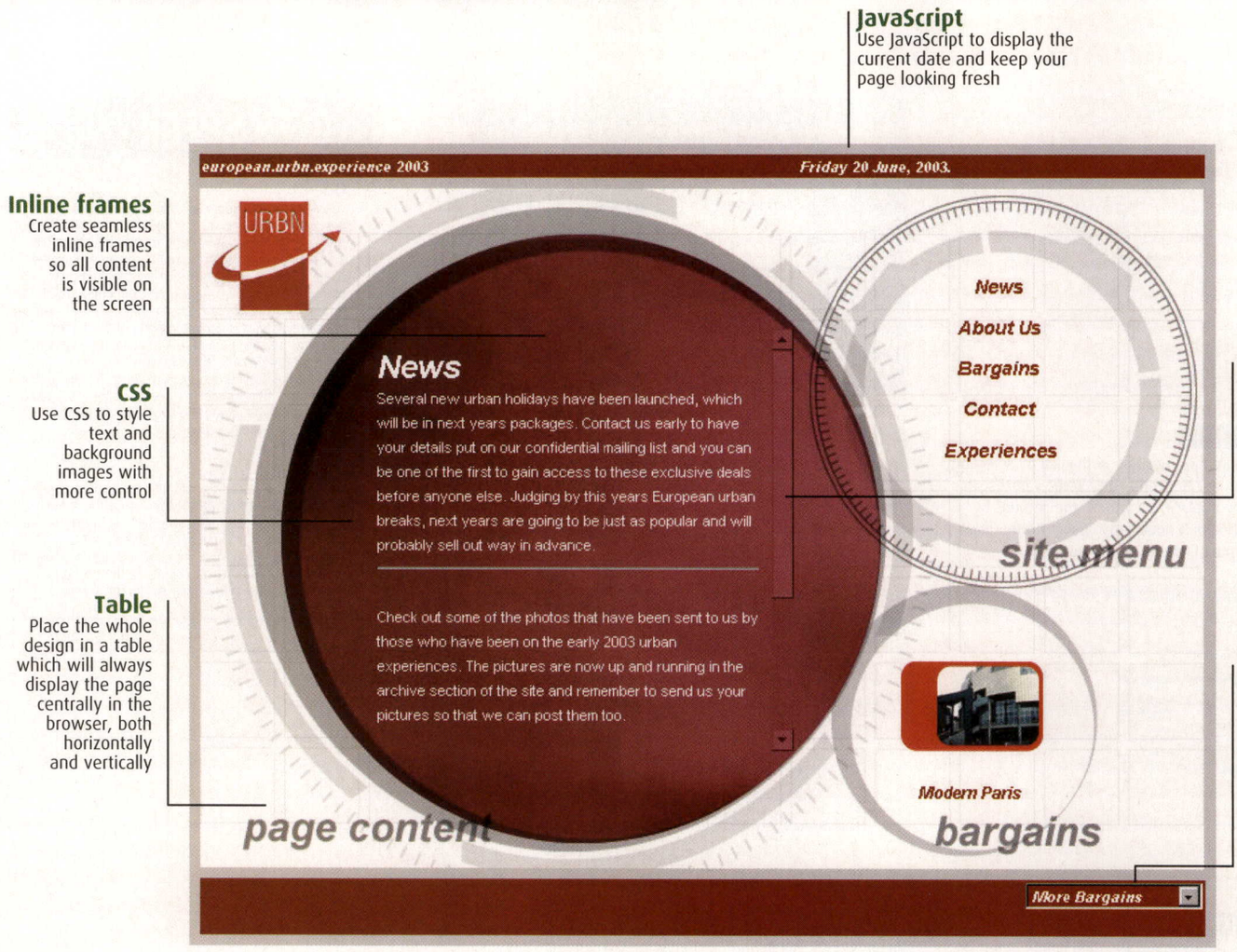
ADD SOME ELEMENTS

With our page currently looking fairly basic, you may wish to experiment with what you've learnt to add more elements. Similarly, do spend some time familiarising yourself with the way class references and CSS styles are defined at code level, while exploring the Panel Groups mentioned earlier. Next month we'll be expanding on the topics covered by inserting links of various appearances, as well as talking through tag classes for text. There'll also be a word on using CSS-powered layers or elements to perform layouts, while explaining Dreamweaver's use of content blocks. In the meantime you may wish to check out our step-by-step on using templates and think about how the two areas of site design can be used in conjunction with each other.

TUTORIAL: DREAMWEAVER
CREATE AN AMAZING SITE

THE EXPERT: MARK SHUFFLEBOTTOM

Mark teaches on the BA Hons Interactive Media course at Bournemouth University, and has been a regular contributor to *Practical Internet* for many issues. Although Mark comes from a print background – he is a former designer of *PI* – he is now much more involved in Web design technology, and specialises in everything from Flash design through to 3D graphics and PHP.



CREATE AN AMAZING SITE IN LESS THAN TWO HOURS

Learn all you need to know about creating perfect page layout by following our step-by-step guide to the basic principles...

Creating an interesting layout is one of the key areas of Web design, and Dreamweaver has some nifty tools to help us get the most out of the Web. The problem with HTML is that it isn't really a design tool. As the name suggests, Hyper Text Markup Language is a language for marking text as bold, italic, etc. In this tutorial we're going to look at other technologies which can give you a huge amount of control over the page – one of the secrets of great Web page design!

The first of these is Cascading Style Sheets. These give the designer greater ability to control content on the page. For example, when styling up text under CSS you'll find extra formatting that will let you determine the line height space between each line. This is similar to the kind of control you have in more traditional forms of publishing such as print design. In fact, with CSS it's possible to take control over many of the elements of the page. Even scrollbars can be controlled with CSS.

The second technology is JavaScript, which we'll use to power a Jump menu, which provides a menu system for linking to other pages. JavaScript will also be used to dynamically generate the date on the page, keeping the content looking fresh.

We'll use HTML to nest some tables, so the page will fit centrally into any browser. Our tutorial will also focus on using frames nested inside a table to keep the design in one screen, with just small areas scrolling instead of the whole page. ■

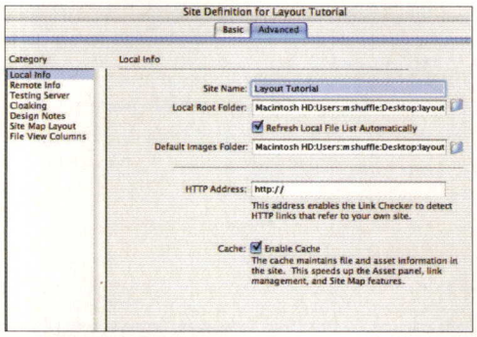
THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Create a stunning page layout with Dreamweaver MX 2004

SKILL LEVEL

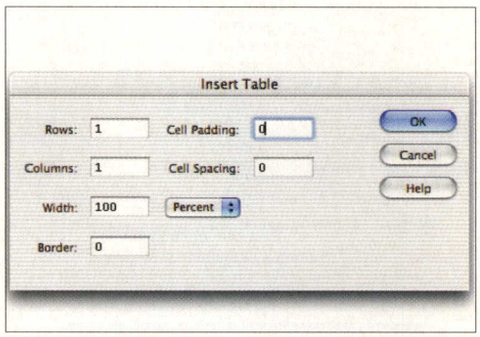
TIME REQUIRED
1.5 hours

ON THE DISC
Dreamweaver/ Tutorial files:
layout start folder
layout finished folder



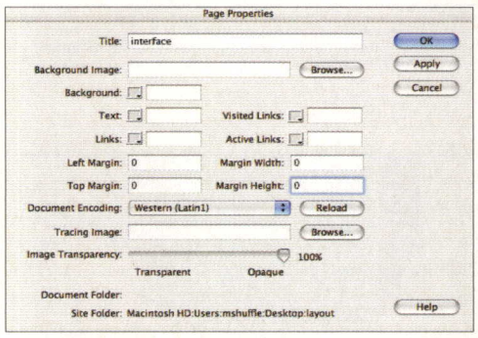
1 GETTING STARTED

Copy the Layout Start folder from the cover CD to your hard drive and start Dreamweaver. From the Site menu choose New site. In the pop-up window click on the Advanced tab and name the site. Now browse for the folder which you copied to your hard drive as the local root folder.



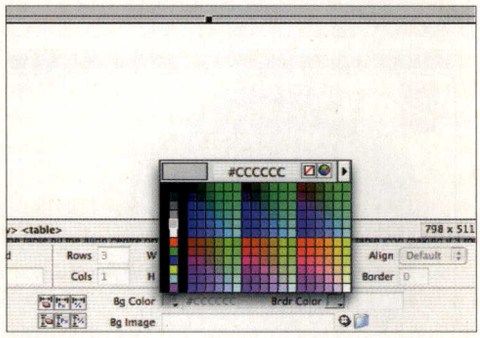
2 CREATE A TABLE

You can also browse for the Default Images folder inside the Layout Start folder. Press OK to finish. Create a new page from the File menu. Now, on the Insert bar, click on the Add Table icon. Make the table 1 row by 1 column with no cell padding, spacing or border, and 100% wide.



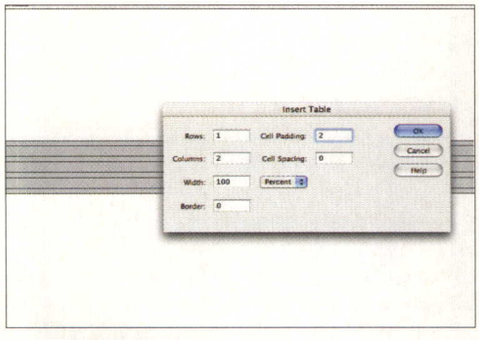
3 SET THE PROPERTIES

With the table selected look in the Properties palette and change the height to 100%. Now go to the Modify menu and choose Page Properties. In the pop-up window enter the title and change all the margins to Zero. Press OK and save your page as 'interface.html' in the folder.



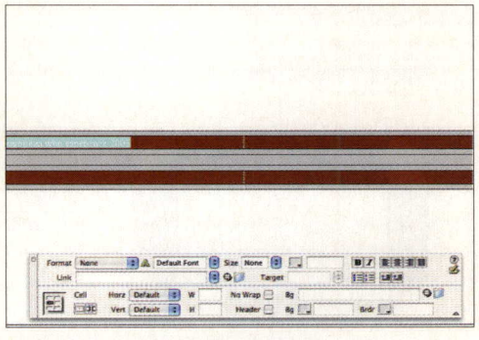
4 ANOTHER TABLE

With your cursor inside the table, hit Align Centre on the Properties palette. Click the New Table icon making it 3 rows by 1 column, 751 pixels wide and with an 8-pixel cell spacing, with all other settings at Zero, then click OK. With the table selected change the background colour to light grey.



5 NESTED TABLES

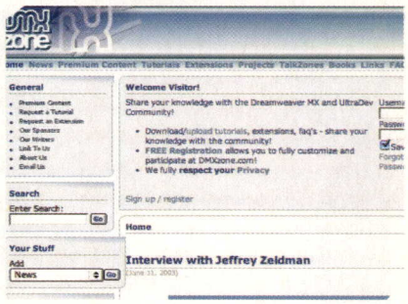
Place your cursor inside the top cell of the new table and once again click on the Table icon on the Insert bar. Make the new table 1 row by 2 columns with a cell padding of 2, 100% wide, with the other settings at Zero. Now click OK to nest this table inside the first.



6 BACKGROUND COLOUR

With the table selected, change the background colour to #740101 in the Properties palette and press Return. Press Ctrl & C (Alt & C on the Mac) to copy the table, then click in the bottom cell and press Ctrl & V (or Alt & C) to paste the table in here. Back in the top cell, add a page title as shown.

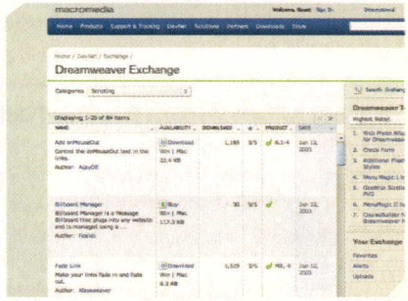
BOOKMARKS



DMX ZONE

www.dmxzone.com

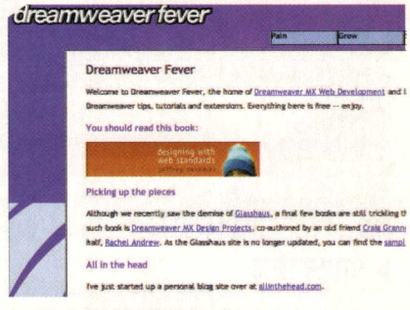
DMX Zone is so much more than a great tutorial Web site. More like a community, it encourages its visitors to become members and join in the shared knowledge through tips, tricks and online forums. There's a great variety of content and many downloads to help as well.



DREAMWEAVER EXCHANGE

www.macromedia.com/cfusion/exchange/index.cfm?view=sn120

Become a member of Macromedia's Dreamweaver Exchange and you can get your hands on a whole bunch of downloads that offer extra features to the standard Dreamweaver setup. There are many longwinded tasks that are cut down to a simple click with some of the extensions, and they're all rated for you.



DREAMWEAVER FEVER

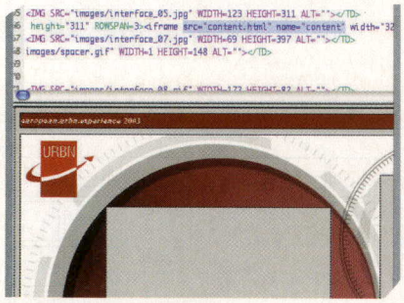
www.dreamweaverfeaver.com

This site not only has a cool name but some really nice tutorials too – it's well worth a bookmark, as it looks as though it will keep growing. The site has extensions for download, articles, experiments and Web development information, all in a very pleasant design.

EXPERT ADVICE

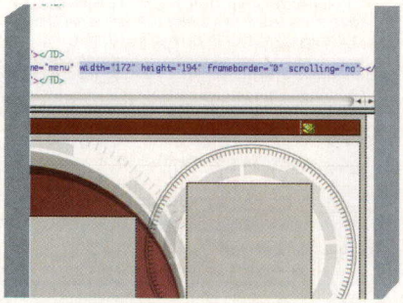
INLINE FRAMES

In the tutorial we have added some content inside an <iframe> tag which refers to an inline frame. This provides an area of the page which is brought in from another HTML page. These are supported by all modern browsers, and have been available in IE since version 4 and Netscape since version 6.



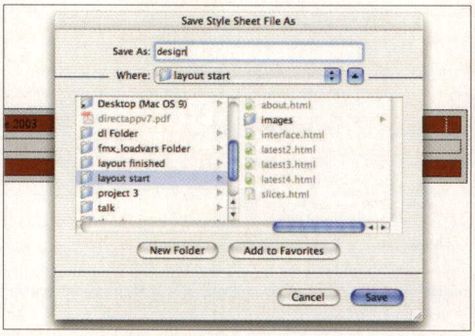
SOURCE AND NAME

Each inline frame needs a source file which is loaded into the designated area when the page loads into the browser. By adding a name for the frame, this can be referenced by any links so that you can change the content in the frame when you click on a button (see step 20).



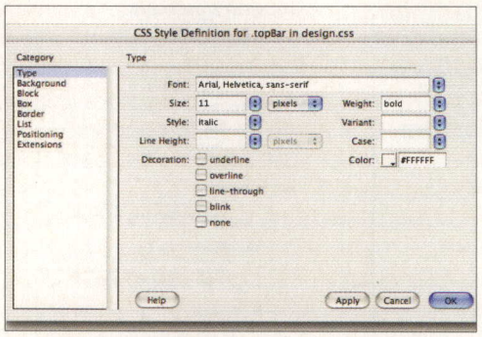
OTHER TAGS

By adding a set width and height we can ensure that our content fits into the exact space that has been allowed for it in the table. It's always a good idea to put the frame border to zero so there's a seamless integration with the frame. Other tags allow you to specify whether you want to include scrollbars or not.



7 STYLE THIS TEXT

In the CSS panel click the options in the top right-hand corner and choose New CSS Style from the drop menu. Name the style 'topBar' and click OK. You'll be prompted to save the style sheet, so name it 'Design' and save it in the root folder. You will then be presented with a new window.

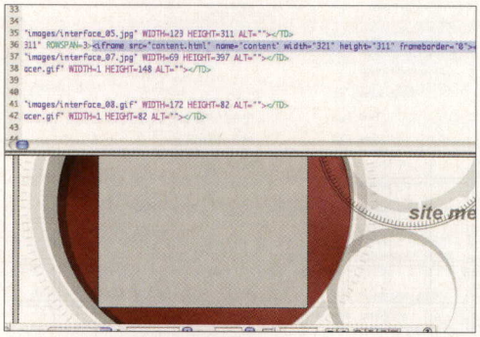


8 SAVE THE STYLE

Copy the details as shown in the screenshot above then click OK to save the style. Highlight the text in the top bar on the screen, then select the topBar style in the CSS palette to style the text. Now save the document and open 'slices.html' from the root folder.

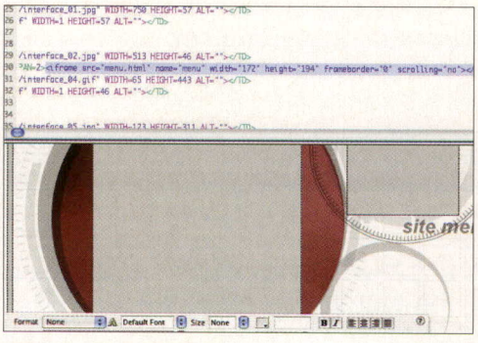
9 COPY AND PASTE

Click on the table edge and press Ctrl & C (or Alt & C on the Mac) to copy the table and images, then go back to your interface.html document, position the cursor in the centre cell of the table and press Ctrl & V (Alt & V) to paste.



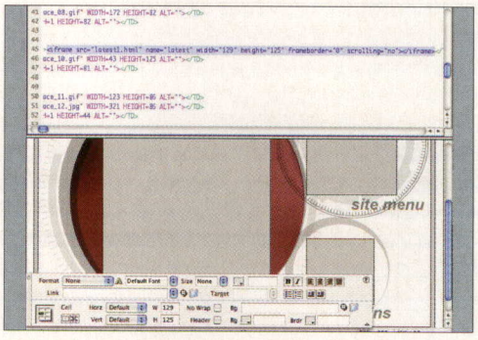
10 DELETE THE CENTRE

Click on the centre of the largest circle and press the Delete button. Now enter a width of 321 and a height of 311 into the Properties palette. Click on the Code view and highlight .



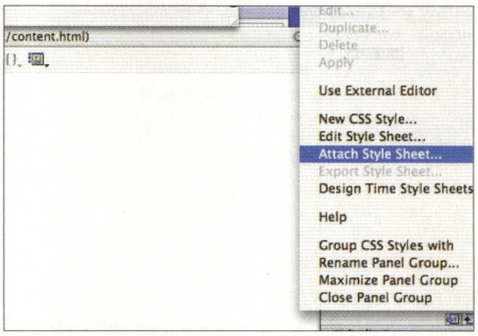
11 INSIDE THE CIRCLE

Click inside the top right circle and press Delete, giving a height of 194 in the Properties palette. Again in the Code view delete the non-breaking space ( ) and type this code: <iframe src="menu.html" name="menu" width="172" height="194" frameborder="0" scrolling="no"></iframe>.



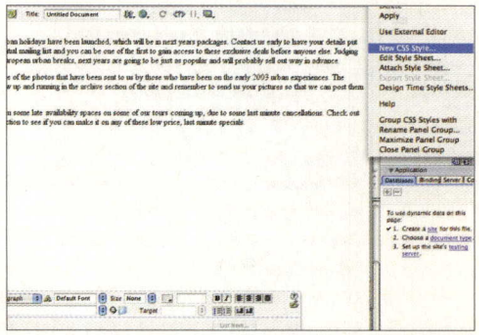
12 LAST CIRCLE

Click in the last circle and press Delete, then enter a width of 129 and a height of 125 in the Properties palette. Now add the last inline frame where the   is in the code: <iframe src="latest1.html" name="latest" width="129" height="125" frameborder="0" scrolling="no"></iframe>.



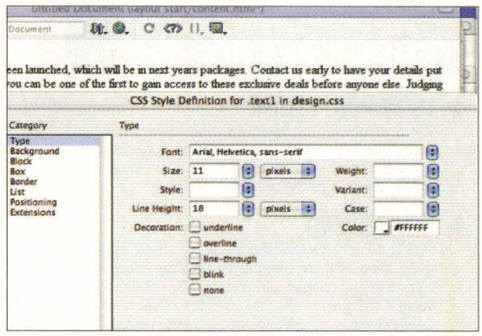
13 A NEW DOCUMENT

Save your document now and leave it open. We need to create the documents that will fit into the inline frames we have coded. Create a new HTML page from the File menu and save it as 'content.html'. In the CSS palette select Options and choose Attach CSS Style from the drop list.



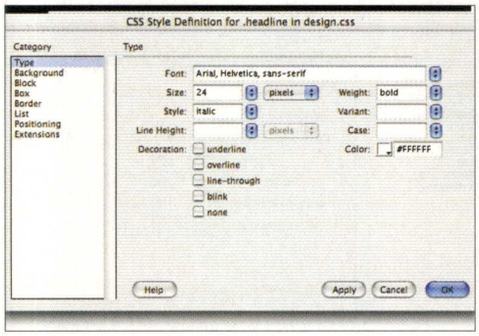
14 ATTACH STYLE SHEET

Browse for the design.css that you created in step 7 and click OK. Open step14.txt and copy and paste the text over into your content.html document. Now, as you have some text, we'll need to style it accordingly. Click on the CSS options and choose New CSS Style.



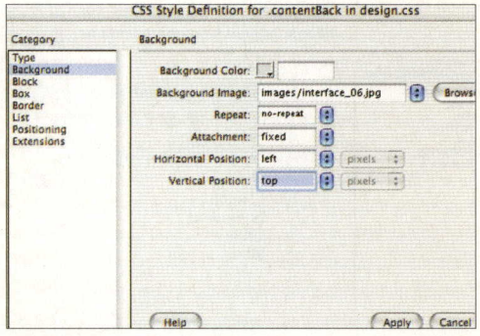
15 STYLE THE TEXT

Name the style 'text1', click OK and fill in the details as shown above. Highlight all the onscreen text except the word 'news' and click on text1 in the CSS Property palette. Don't worry that you can't read the text, as it'll be sorted out soon. Click on CSS options and choose New CSS Style.



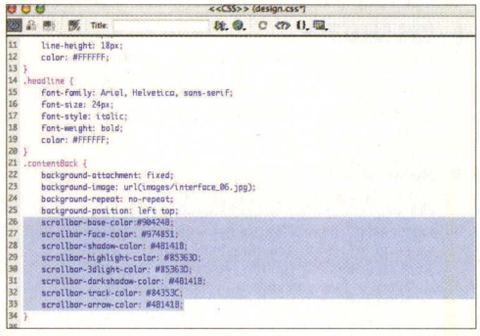
16 HEADLINE STYLE

Name your new style Headline and click OK. Now copy all the details as shown above into the CSS pop-up window. Once you've done this, click OK then highlight the word 'news' and click on Headline in the CSS Property palette to apply it. Once again create a new CSS style.



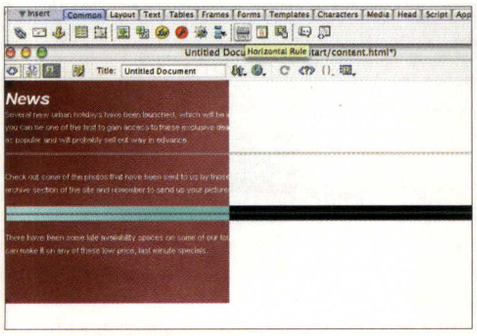
17 BACKGROUND STYLE

Name your new style 'contentBack' and click OK. Now click on the Background category on the left and fill in the details as shown above, browsing for 'interface_06.jpg' from the Images folder. Now click OK. Use the File menu to open the file 'design.css' to edit the style sheet manually.



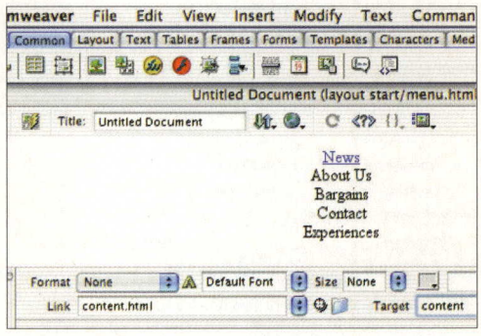
18 MANUAL STYLE

Open 'step18.txt' from the root folder. Copy the text. Go back to design.css and paste the text in before the closing bracket } of the contentBack style. Save design.css and close it. In your content.html file you'll see a body tag at the bottom of the document; click on this and then click contentBack.



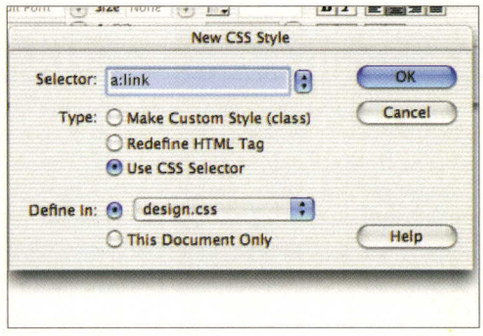
19 HORIZONTAL RULE

Now you should be able to see some of your text, but again, don't worry, as everything will rectify itself. Position your cursor between paragraphs and click on the Horizontal Rule icon in the Insert panel. Save the document and close it. Now create a new HTML page from the File menu.



20 CREATING THE MENU

Save the file as 'menu.html' in the site root folder and type out the links shown above. Highlight the first link and, in the Properties palette, add a link to content.html with the target set as 'content' as shown. Highlight About Us and add a link to about.html with the target as 'content'.



21 FURTHER LINKS

For each of the other links simply add # instead of a real link and again make sure that the target is filled in as content. When that's done, click on the CSS options and choose Attach Style Sheet then choose design.css. Now add a new CSS style from the Options menu.

GEEK SPEAK

LOCAL ROOT FOLDER
This is the folder that you build your site in. When you buy Web space, you're given one folder for your site. As you can't take the contents of your hard drive online, this acts as the site contents.

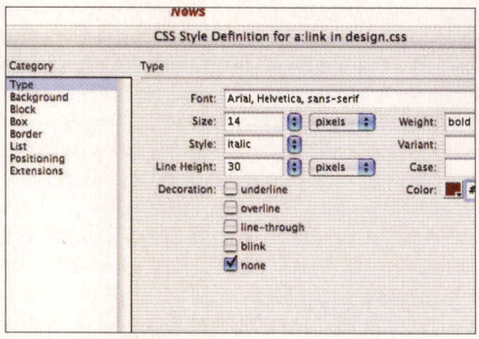
CELL PADDING
Each cell in a table can have a value in pixels assigned to it. This pads the content away from the edge, so it stops text and images touching the edge of the cell. A value is assigned to the table, but cells can't have different values – hence the need to nest tables.

NESTED TABLES
Tables are sometimes placed inside each other to give a greater complexity to the page design. This is known as nesting tables, and is usually done when you want to apply different cell spacing or padding to the master table. In the tutorial there's one single cell table which all other content is nested inside, so our content will always appear in the centre no matter what size the browse

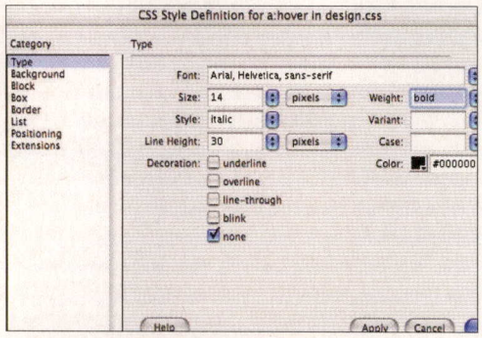
CSS SELECTOR
The Selector tags are special tags that refer to links and the state of those links. By setting styles for them you're saving yourself the added complication of creating JavaScript rollovers which require images and are therefore bulkier in file size.

JAVASCRIPT
This is a slightly more complicated programming language that is used by the browser to add extra functionality where HTML cannot provide a solution. JavaScript is used to add more interactivity to a Web page, as it normally controls browser elements such as layers, pop-up windows or dynamic information, as in this tutorial.

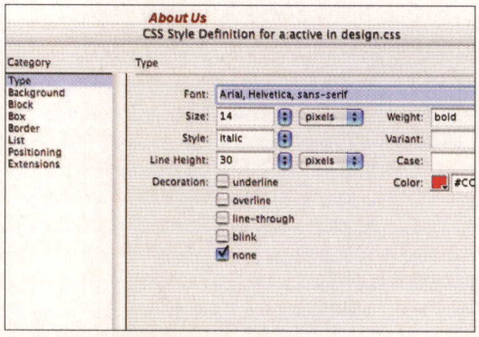
JUMP MENU
A Jump menu is a small drop menu that's used for navigating to content. It's powered by JavaScript and is extremely useful as all the options are hidden behind a small area, making it suitable for designs that are tight on space or if you want to provide a one-click navigation system.



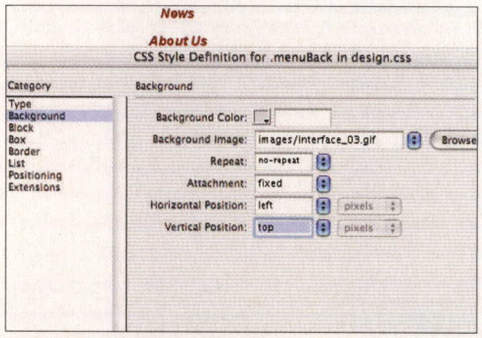
22 CSS SELECTOR
When you name the CSS style choose CSS Selector as the type, then from the Selector menu choose a:link and click OK. Copy all the details in as shown above then click OK. You will need to create other states for the link, so create another new CSS style from the Options menu.



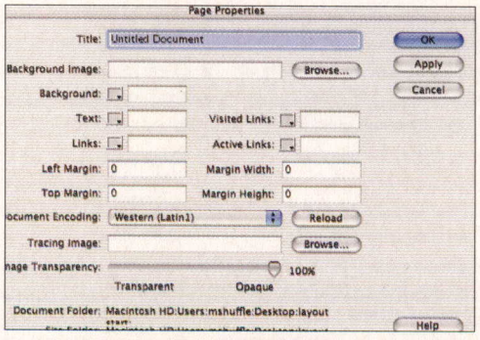
23 HOVERING AROUND
Choose a:hover from the CSS Selector drop-down menu and click OK. As before, copy the details in the screenshot above to give the link a different colour when you hover your mouse over the top. Click OK when you're finished and again create another new CSS style.



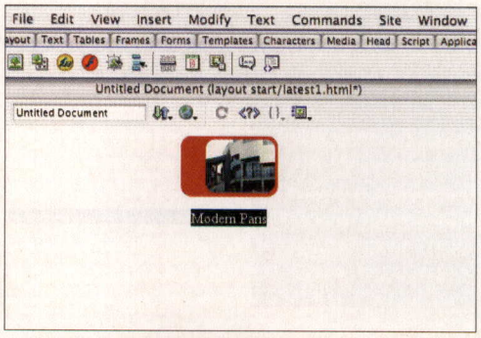
24 ACTIVE AND VISITED
Create the a:active state for the CSS Selector, copying in the information as shown above, then create another new CSS style for the a:hover from the CSS Selector. Make this style exactly the same as the a:active state, copying in the information from the screenshot above .



25 MENU BACKGROUND
Create a new CSS style and change the type of CSS to a Custom Style, name it 'menuBack' and click OK. Choose the Background category from the left and fill in the details, browsing for the image from the Images folder as you did previously in step 17. Now click OK.



26 APPLY THE BACKGROUND
In the bottom left of the document, click on the Body tag then click on the menuBack option from the CSS palette. Go to the Modify menu, choose Page Properties and change all the margins to 0. Click OK then save and close the document.



27 A NEW DOCUMENT
Create a new HTML page and save it as 'latest1.html'. Go to the Modify menu, select Page Properties, change the margins to 0, and click OK. Click the Insert Image icon on the Insert panel; choose latest1.gif from the Images folder. Centre it on the Properties palette and type the title below it.

BT YAHOO! Broadband

With BT Yahoo! Broadband you'll get new, powerful features and amazing content, and because it is up to ten times faster than standard dial-up, you'll be experiencing it all in a fraction of the time.

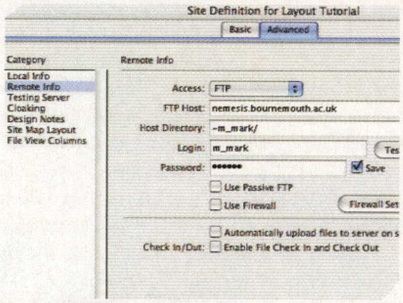
For free activation call 0800 328 6666. For a free modem as well, sign up at www.btyahoo.com

The way the internet was meant to be.

BT

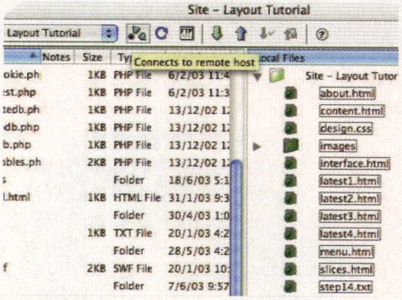
Online Modem: offer ends 21.12.03, standard price £70, offer price previously £40. Subject to availability, survey & min computer specification. BT line required. Min 12 months, BT terms apply.

EXPERT ADVICE



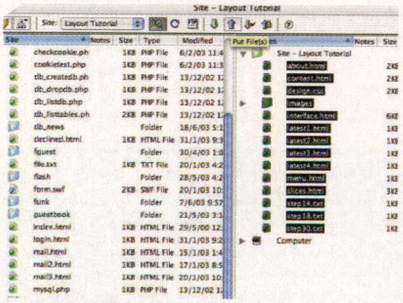
SETTING THE FTP DETAILS

The File Transfer Protocol details are supplied by your Web host. These are normally your domain name, username and password, but can also be an IP address rather than domain name, depending on your host and package. You need to fill these in as shown, by editing the site.



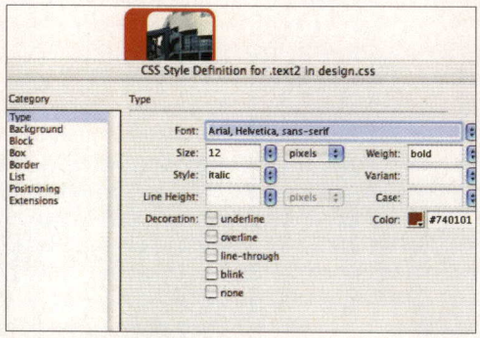
SITE VIEW

Open your Site Panel – you may need to drag it out of the Panel Set on the right of Dreamweaver to see it more easily. Change the view so you can see your local and remote files together, then press the Connect icon to go online and connect to your space.



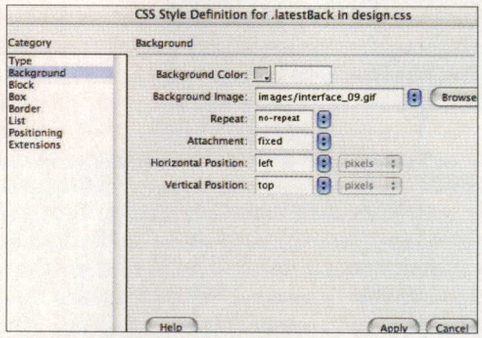
UPLOAD THE FILES

Once your ISP has connected you to the Internet, Dreamweaver will connect you to your Web space. Click the first file in your local site, Shift-click the last file in your site to select them all, then hit the Upload button. You will be asked if you want to upload.



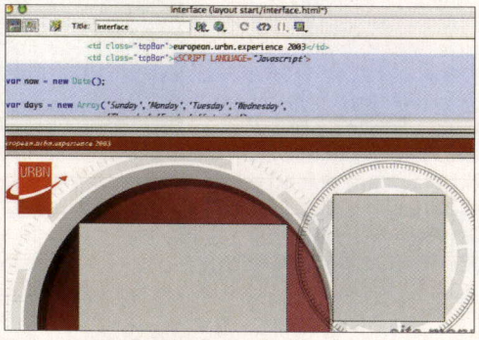
28 APPLY THE STYLE

Click on the CSS options and choose Attach Style Sheet from the drop menu and then design.css. Now create a new CSS style, name it 'text2' and click OK. Copy in the details shown above and click OK. Select the text and click on text2 in the CSS panel to apply the style to the text.



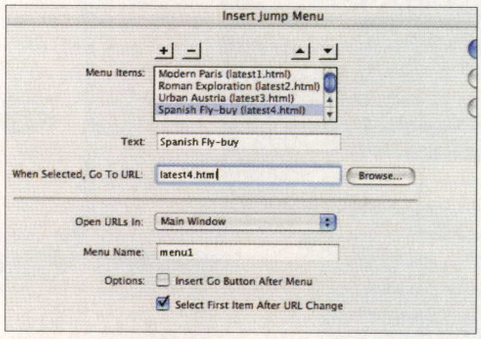
29 STYLE THE BACKGROUND

Now create a new CSS style, name it 'latestBack' and click OK. Click on the Background category on the left and copy in the details as shown above. Now click on the Body tag in the bottom left of the document and select latestBack from the CSS palette. Save and close this file.



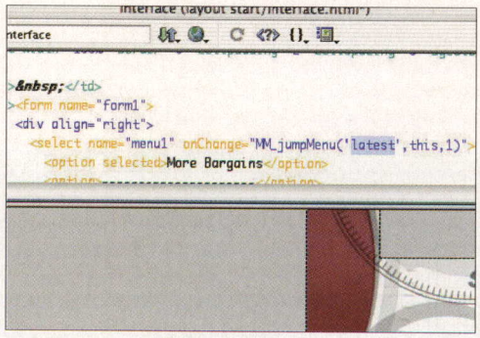
30 DO IT TODAY

Open interface.html and click in the top right cell of the table next to the heading. At the bottom of the document you'll see a <td> tag. Select this and click on the topBar style in the CSS palette. Open step30.txt from the root folder and copy and paste the code over   in the Code view.



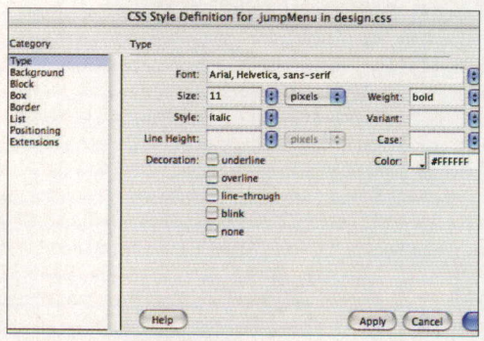
31 JUMP MENU

Position your cursor in the right-hand cell in the red bar at the bottom. From the Insert menu select Forms and choose Jump Menu. In the pop-up add the words 'more bargains', then click the Plus at the top of the pop-up. Add four links to latest1.html-latest4.html as shown above.



32 FINISH THE JUMP

Make sure you have the option to Select First Item After URL Change selected, then click OK. With the menu selected, open the Code view and change the word 'parent' to 'latest' as highlighted above. Now create a new CSS style and name it 'jumpMenu'. Click OK.



33 NEARLY FINISHED...

All that's left for you to do now is copy the details for the style as shown in the screenshot above, then click on the Background category, and finally, add #740101.

123-reg.co.uk

Domain Names

~~99p*~~ UK Domains

Check it out yourself

www.123-reg.co.uk

1 Register

It's never been easier or cheaper to have your own domain name!

123-reg delivers a totally automated service with the lowest prices in the World, guaranteed! Stunning price includes:

- Web based control panel • Web forwarding • Change name servers • Holding page wizard
- Catch-all e-mail forwarding • 100 e-mail forwarding addresses • Full domain & renewal management
- Change IPS tags (UK domains) • Change Contact Details • Display and e-mail invoice
- Manage your own DNS • Domain name locking • Affiliate scheme • No transfer out fee

Additional services include: Domain Watchers, POP3 and Sub-domains, Pre-register for new TLDs.

~~99p*~~ UK Domains

2 Build

Build before you buy... risk free!

It's never been as simple or as fast to build a great looking site!

The 123-reg site builder is a clear market leader in terms of features and functionality, having been developed purely with our customers in mind. Exclusive to 123-reg, this new low-cost service allows anyone to build and maintain a professional looking web site in minutes; no knowledge of programming required!

Includes all the necessary tools required to create and update a web site, such as over 100 designs, templates, an intuitive editor, tables, forms and multimedia capabilities. The product is ideal for people and companies who want to establish an on-line presence but don't want to get immersed in development or high costs.

~~£4.20**~~ per month

3 Host

There's no better place to host your site!

123-reg manages its own UK based data centres, with state-of-the-art security and all the backup facilities you would expect from a market leader. Your site will be hosted on a high-end server and be totally under your control via our easy to use control panel. Choose from two great packages that will keep your web sites on-line...all the time!

Regular:
250 MB for £2.99† per month, 1 GB data transfer (bandwidth) per month, CGI/Perl, on-line file manager, 10 POP 3 accounts, Webalizer statistics, Unlimited e-mail forwarding addresses.

Xtra Large:
500 MB for £4.99† per month, 2 GB data transfer (bandwidth) per month, CGI/Perl, on-line file manager, 25 POP 3 accounts, Webalizer statistics, Unlimited e-mail forwarding addresses.

from ~~£2.99†~~ per month

American Express MasterCard VISA Switch Delta Solo

*Plus registrar registration fee, see web site for full details. **Monthly fee must be paid annually.
† Monthly fee, must be paid annually and excludes one-off setup fee of £9.99. All prices exclude VAT. E&OE

Part of the Host Europe Group

TUTORIAL: FLASH

CREATE AN ARCADE GAME WITH FLASH MX 2004

YOUR EXPERT: MATTHEW DAVID

Matthew David has written four Flash books (*Flash MX Magic, Building Great Flash MX Games, Flash 3D Graphics Bible, Flash MX Communication Server Bible*) and has contributed to an additional 12 books (including best sellers such as the *Dreamweaver Bible*). When Matthew is not dreaming in ActionScript, he is busy raising his four kids with his wife in Wisconsin USA.

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Set up Flash to create downloadable arcade games

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
Two hours

ON THE DISC
Flash/Tutorials: Pages62_67 [folder]

PART ONE

CREATE AN ARCADE GAME WITH FLASH MX 2004

Game development is an exciting new arena for Flash. Over the coming issues, we're going to take you through the process of creating a game for the Net

The game development world is arguably the fastest-growing market within the entertainment industry and the latest offering is rich, creative online games. The market is still small, but Flash is emerging as the favoured program for creating these online diversions. When working with Web games, you have a decision to make – on one hand you can't expect users to download game code that runs into 100Mb in size; on the other hand you are not limited to file size. A CD-ROM game may be limited to 12 levels a game. The Web allows you to link an infinite number of game levels together.

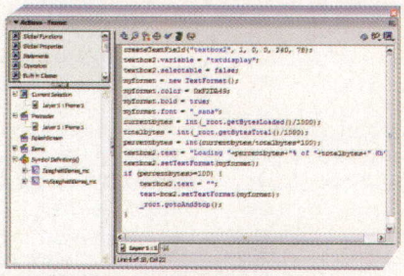
Over the next few issues, you will be building a Flash game called Track 'n' Field. The premise of the game is simple enough: to be the grand champion to the game you need to compete and complete six games (100m sprint, hurdles, discus, javelin, long jump, high jump). Because the events will be played on the Internet, the game will be downloaded and installed only when needed. The benefit of this is that if you want to add additional games, say a clay pigeon shoot, you can add the link to the game within Flash. The next time the game player logs on, the new game will be waiting for them.

Now, it's true that Flash isn't the perfect game environment. Many simple game tools, such as real 3D and joystick control, are not available. But a game created in Flash can be accessed by a broad user base. What this means is that your game may not have OpenGL 3D graphics, but it will port to the Web, to PC, to PlayStation, to Mac, to Linux, to mobile phones (NTT DoCoMo supports Flash Lite, a version of Flash based on the Flash 4 Player) and a host of additional emerging solutions. In addition to that, anyone can install the 450Kb Flash Player.

And although Flash doesn't have 3D and joystick control, Flash MX 2004 does have a rich, Object Oriented Programming language with ActionScript 2.0. You will also find that Flash supports most graphics types, video, audio and you can find thousands of lines of code in different books. So enough gapping. Let's get started. ■

TUTORIAL: FLASH
CREATE AN ARCADE GAME WITH FLASH MX 2004

EXPERT ADVICE



ADDING A PRELOADING SCRIPT

In this early stages of the game, the file size is something like 50Kb. Even for dial-up that is small. As you flesh out the game, though, you will increase the file size. There will be additional sound effects, complex graphics and ActionScript. This all adds up.

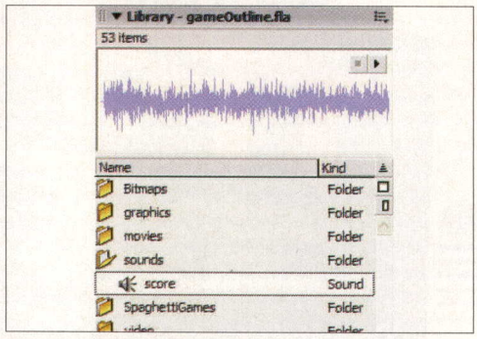
To prepare users for this, you can add a preloading script. A preloader places animation on the stage along with script explaining how long the movie will take to download. This means that if the download is a hefty one, visitors know how long they can expect to wait for it all to happen. Otherwise they might think your site has crashed.

The preloader section is also a good place to add shameless advertising for your company or site. Later, you will add a splash screen that will do this. But for now, open the Scene panels. You will see a default scene is added. This is for the current game environment. Select the + symbol and add a second scene. This will add it below the above scene. That is fine, but you really want it to appear before the game. Drag the second scene in the Scene panel above the game scene. Double-click the new scene and you will open up in a blank scene. Open the Actions panel, select frame 1 on of the Timeline and then add the following ActionScript:

```
createTextField("textbox2", 1, 0, 0, 240, 78);
textbox2.variable = "txtdisplay";
textbox2.selectable = false;
myformat = new TextFormat();
myformat.color = 0xF2DA49;
myformat.bold = true;
myformat.font = "_sans";
currentbytes = int(_root.getBytesLoaded()/1000);
totalbytes = int(_root.getBytesTotal()/1000);
percentbytes = int(currentbytes/totalbytes*100);
textbox2.text = "Loading "+percentbytes+"% of
"+totalbytes+" Kb";
textbox2.setTextFormat(myformat);
if (percentbytes>=100) {
        textbox2.text = "Loading Complete";
        text-box2.setTextFormat(myformat);
        _root.gotoAndStop();
}
```

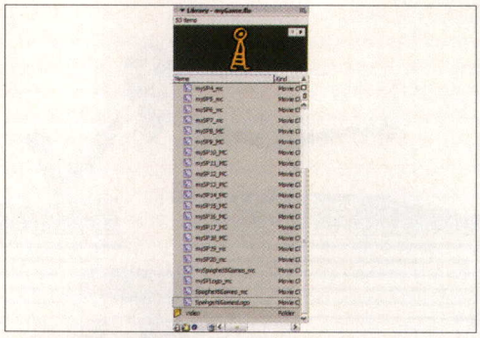
This does a couple of things: first it creates a dynamic text field and secondly the ActionScript looks to see how large the movie is and will begin to download the movie. As the movie is downloading the ActionScript will tell you how much of the movie has loaded.

Later, as you add more to the games, the scripts will become more complex.



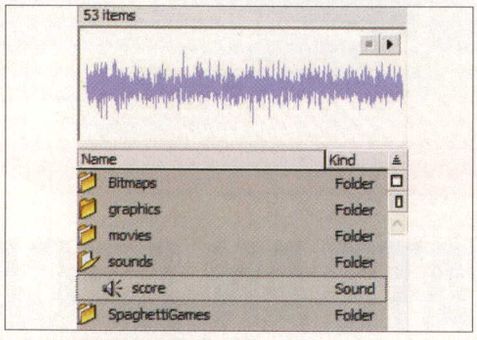
1 LIBRARY VISIT

Open Flash MX 2004 or Flash MX – these steps will work for both versions of Flash. Save your movie as 'myGame.fla.' and then select Windows > Library to open the Library. The Library manages all of the assets you will use in your games.



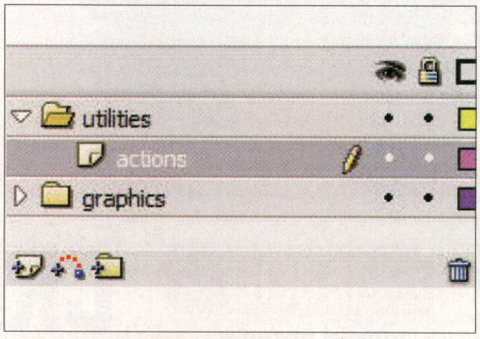
2 ORGANISE YOUR LIBRARY

You need to set up some folders that organise your content. At the bottom left-hand corner of the Library is a + sign on a folder. Select this. A folder, named 'unitled folder 1', will appear – name it 'Movies.' Now make more folders, labelled, 'Bitmaps', 'Graphics', 'Video', and 'Sound'.



3 IMPORT FILES

You can import a wide range of media into Flash. Select File > Import > Import to Library... and locate the JPEG in the 'Sport Images' folder. Move the imported JPG graphics to the Bitmap folder. Now import 'score.mp3' into the Library. Place the sound clip in the Sound folder.

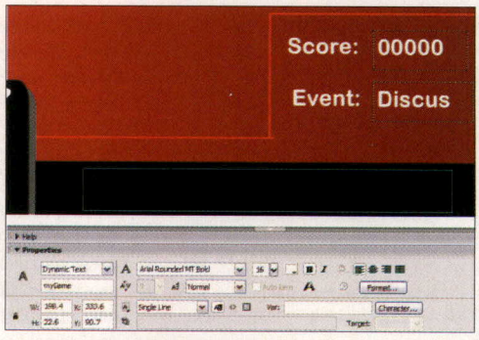


4 THE ACTIONS LAYER

Create two new folders, 'utilities' and 'graphics.' Select the Utilities folder and add a new layer and name it 'actions.' You will be adding your ActionScript programs in the Actions layer. The Actions need to be above the rest for Flash to interpret the script correctly.

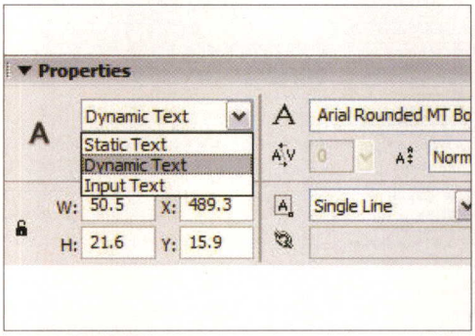
5 CONSTRUCT THE BACKGROUND

The background and layout of the game is nice and simple, which helps direct attention to the games. At the top of the screen are links to the Intro and Settings, which we'll come to. You should place the different backgrounds onto their own layers in the Graphics folder on the Timeline.



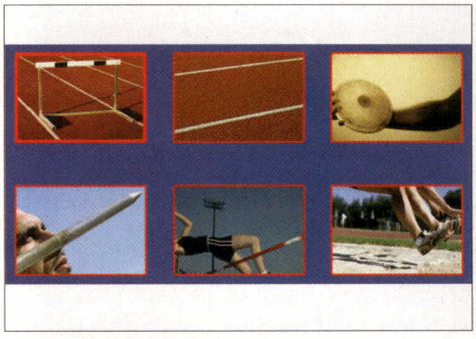
6 DYNAMIC AND STATIC TEXT

There are three different types of Flash text: static, dynamic and input. Static allows you to write blocks of text on the screen; dynamic can have an ID name associated with dynamic text field. Input text allows the person viewing to write text in as can be done with a HTML form field.



7 TEXT CHOICE

The dynamic text fields are to the right of the words 'Score' and 'Event' and will update with score and event information. To create dynamic text fields, select the Text Field tool and in the Properties panel, choose Dynamic. The ID field below the text type is now available – enter 'myScore'.



8 BUTTON DOWN THE HATCHES

The six buttons that allow a user to select a game are movie clips. Flash MX and 2004 sees more emphasis on movie clips. With this in mind, we're going to encourage you to move away from buttons and towards this form of linking. In the end you will find that you have more control.

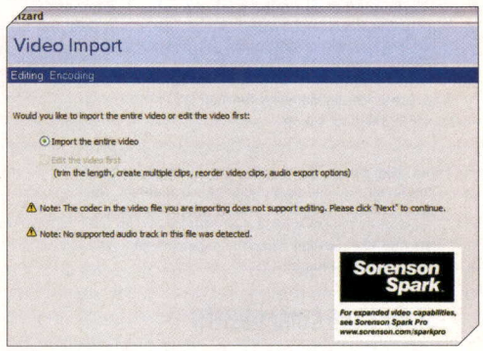
IN DETAIL: VIDEO IN FLASH MOVIES

Video never fails to impress people, and Flash MX 2004 makes importing it a breeze

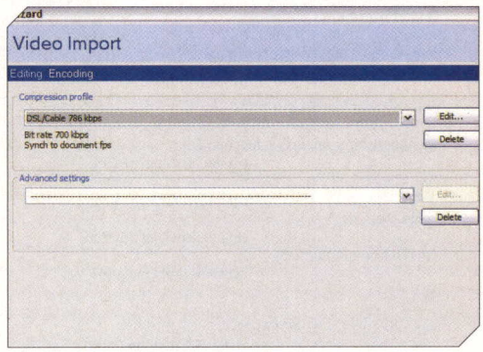
Flash MX finally allowed video to be supported within Flash movies, and Flash MX 2004 has extended this feature even further. Both programs support a new Flash format called Flash Video (FLV). Although Flash Video files can't be previewed with the Flash player by themself, with a cunning use of either import or link through ActionScript to the Flash Video, all is sorted.

If you are developing for Flash 6 player, which is currently the most popular version of the Flash player on the market today, you will not be able to link to external Flash Video files. The only way you can do this is through using Flash MX Communication Server. You will also need your users to be running the 6,0,65,0 version of the Flash player. Then you can embed the Flash Video into your movies when you create them with Flash MX.

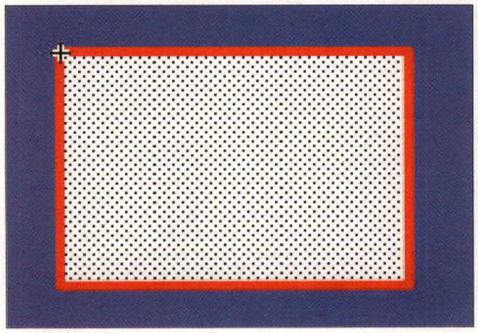
Flash MX 2004 and the Flash 7 player extends what you can do with Flash Video. You can now link to external Flash Video files through ActionScript, which can significantly reduce the size of your files. Video is notoriously big in file size, but if you can keep the video files separated from the main Flash movie, you will reduce the initial download for your customer. ■



■ Importing video using Flash has been made infinitely easier in Flash MX and later versions

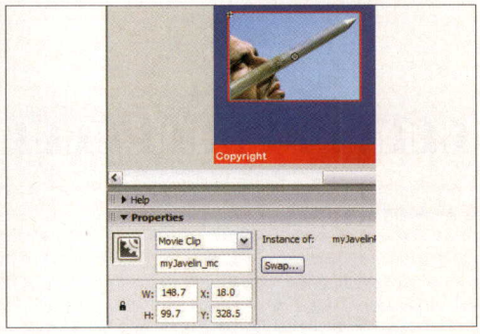


■ Although video files have a reputation for being bloated, it's possible to trim them down with Flash



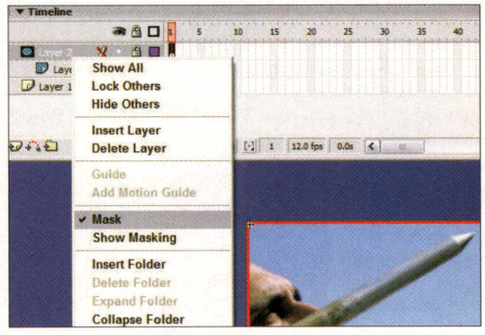
9 APPLYING MASKS

Create a rectangle 130 x 50 with the Rectangle drawing tool. Add a stroke outline of 4 pixels and colour it red. Select the new drawing and press F8. Select the Movie Clip behaviour and name it 'myMask.' This will be reused for additional movie clips on the stage.



10 GET INTERACTIVE

Select the myMask movie clip and create five copies. Order the copies in two rows of three. Select the top-left movie clip. Select F8 to embed the myMask movie clip into an additional movie clip. Name the new movie clip 'myDiscusEvent_mc.'



11 CREATE THE MASK

Open myDiscusEvent_mc. Select the myMask movie and choose Modify > Break Apart. Right-click the rectangle and choose Distribute to Layers. Select Layer 1 and choose Insert Layer. Select the new layer and drag an instance of the Discus bitmap onto the stage. Right click Layer 2 and choose Mask.

EXPERT ADVICE

CONTROL TEXT THROUGH ACTIONSCRIPT

Players need to see what game they are playing, which can be achieved using the Movie Class. You will need to add names to your movies on the stage. Select the discus image and name the image in the Properties Panel 'myDiscus_mc.' The dynamic text field has already been named 'event_txt.' Select frame one of the Actions panel. Add the following:

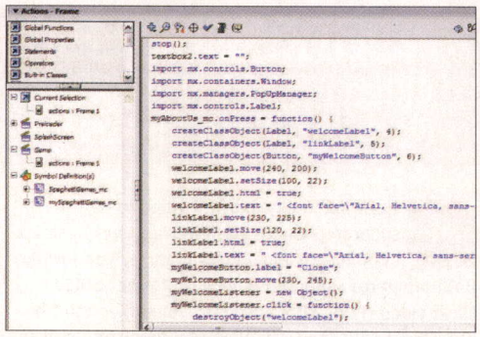
```
myDiscus_mc.onRollOver = function () {
 event_txt.text="Discus";
};
```

The script targets the script to the movie clip called 'myDiscus_mc.' The event handler is onRollOver. This event handler will execute when you roll over the movie clip called 'myDiscus_mc'. The event calls a function. The function dymically populates the text field with the string 'Discus.'

SCRIPT THE COMPONENTS

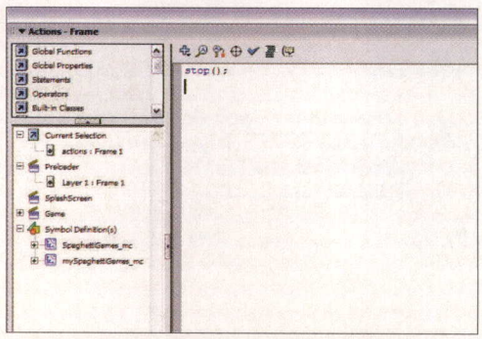
To script components (see step 22), select the Actions layer and choose frame one. Add the following ActionScript:

```
import mx.controls.Button;
import mx.containers.Window;
import mx.managers.PopUpManager;
import mx.controls.Label;

Now apply a function:

myAboutUs_mc.onPress = function () {
                createClassObject(Label,
"welcomeLabel", 3);
                createClassObject(Label,
"linkLabel", 4);
                createClassObject(Button,
"myWelcomeButton", 5);
                welcomeLabel.move(65,
50);

welcomeLabel.setSize(100, 22);
                welcomeLabel.html = true;
                welcomeLabel.text = "
<font face=\"Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif\"
color=\"#999999\">Track N' Field</font>";

linkLabel.move(50, 75);
                linkLabel.setSize(120, 22);
                linkLabel.html = true;
                linkLabel.text = " <a
href=\"http://www.matthewdavid.ws\"><u>Matthew
David.ws</u></a>";
                myWelcomeButton.label =
"Close";

myWelcomeButton.move(55, 100);
                myWelcomeListener =
new Object();
                myWelcomeListener.click
= function() {

destroyObject("welcomeLabel");

destroyObject("linkLabel");

destroyObject("myWelcomeButton");
                };

myWelcomeButton.addEventListener("click",
myWelcomeListener);
};
```



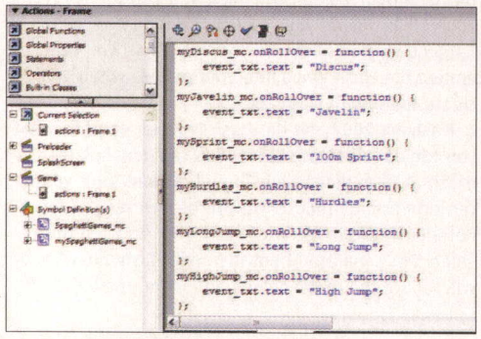
12 GET INTERACTIVE

Interactivity can only be added using ActionScript. You can place ActionScript almost anywhere, inserted through the Actions panel (press F9 to open it). We will be covering the three basic scripts – how to stop a movie, how to control text in a dynamic text field and how to add a preloader.



13 ADD YOUR FIRST ACTIONSCRIPT

Stopping a movie clip from playing through the Timeline is important. Select frame 1 from the Actions layer in the Timeline. Press F9 and type 'Stop();'. That's it. If you are using Flash MX 2004 you can even make it easier by choosing a behaviour to stop the game.

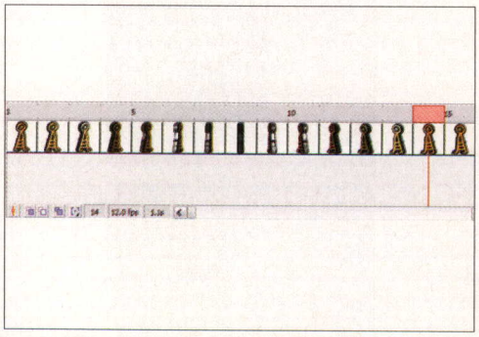


14 INTERACTIVE GAME PIECES

You can now add similar scripts to the additional movies on the stage. The catch is that the game piece name must be unique and that you must associate the onRollOver with the correct movie. Also, ActionScript is case sensitive, which means you need to watch how you type.

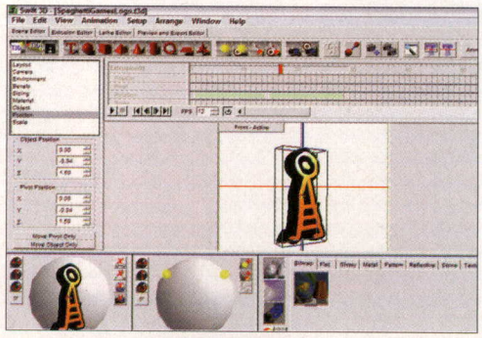
15 CREATE A SPLASH SCREEN

It's common practice to present a splash screen when a game starts. To get an idea of what one looks like, run any game you have. All CD-ROM and console games open with the name of the company who developed the game followed by a video or animation.



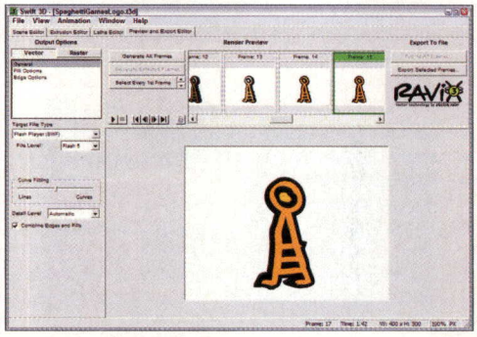
16 3D SPLASH SCREEN

3D isn't inherent to Flash, but there a number of tools you can get to simulate 3D in Flash. A good one is Swift 3D from Electric Rain (**www.erain.com**). It's not as sophisticated as 3ds max or Maya or Soft Image, but it can take 3DS, PDS and AI files and create simple 3D models for Flash.



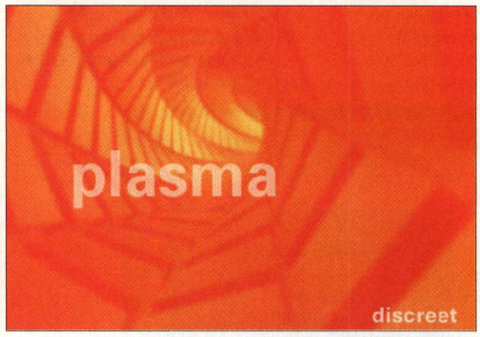
17 CREATE A 3D FLASH MOVIE

For the splash screen, we imported an Illustrator file into Swift 3D. The graphic was immediately converted into a 3D model. Using the Controls panel in Swift 3D, we added glossy colors and a simple rotation animation sequence. Then it was rendered and exported as a Flash SWF movie.



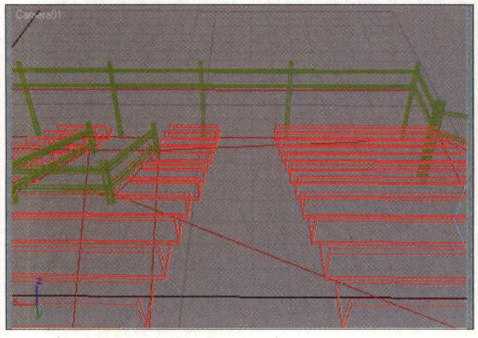
18 A 3D MODEL IN FLASH

Unfortunately you can't import any sound or ActionScript added to the SWF. You now have an imported 3D model with light and shadow features. Select the Preload screen and add the 3D movie. This will play as the movie is downloaded, which you'll see if you preview the movie.



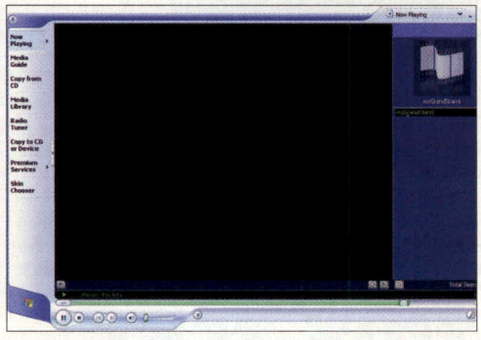
19 DISCREET'S PLASMA 3D

When the game has loaded, you need to inform the user how it will work and look. A second splash screen serves this purpose, which is a short movie of a stadium. A second piece of software was used for this. Plasma is a stripped-down version of 3ds max designed for the Web by discreet.



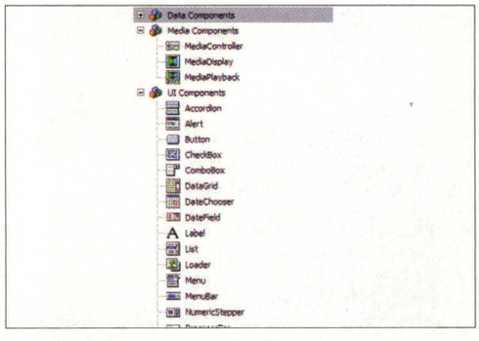
20 THE STADIUM AVI

We mocked up the stadium from 3D models bought from TurboSquid and exported as an AVI. Plasma also lets you export as a Flash SWF Movie. Open the Scene pane. Add a third scene. Move it between the game scene and the preloading scene. This is where the stadium movie goes.



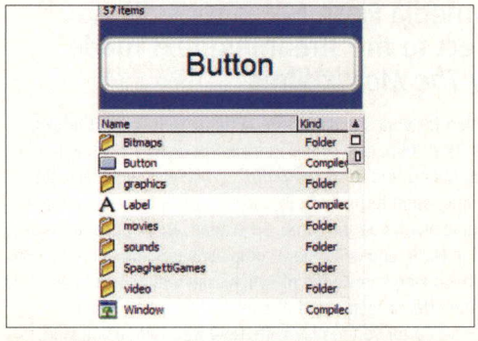
21 VIDEO SPLASH SCREEN

Select the new scene. Choose File > Import > Import to Library... Locate the AVI file of the stadium. The video screen opens and you can import the AVI. Drag an instance of the video onto the stage and preview the game. You'll see the preloader, then the game preview and finally the game.



22 FLASH MX 2004 COMPONENTS

Flash MX 2004 supports a new Component Class called popUpWindow. Create a movie clip to use as a pop-up. Move to the scene that has the main game elements and pick the 'About Us' text. Select F8 and convert the text into a Movie clip. Name this 'myAboutUs_mc' in the Properties panel.



23 ADD COMPONENTS TO THE LIBRARY

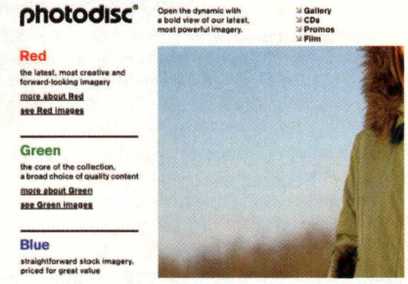
Some of the Flash Components can create the pop-up window effect. The script imports the Components from the Library. Drag the Button, Label and Window Components onto the Stage and then delete them. ActionScript will call the Components and add them to the Stage.

BOOKMARKS

SWIFT 3D

www.swift3D.com

As you have seen, impact to your movies can be significantly enhanced with 3D animation in Flash. Swift 3D is one of the best resources on the Internet for Flash 3D tips and tricks. Hang out at the forums and have some of the best Flash 3D designers answer your questions.



PHOTODISC

www.photodisc.com

We can't all be photographers, but luckliy PhotoDisc is on hand to buy professional photographs. You will find thousands of images in the database that will suit a range different topics.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

Up to this point we have not created a game. What we've done is sort out the layout and foundation. In the next installement you will begin to start constructing your first game. Be warned that you will be getting into the heady world of programming with ActionScript. But, fear not, it's not that bad. But in the meantime, experiment with the layout, create a splash screen and do not forget to add a bit of promotion for your site or business. You are the first person who needs to market your company.

TUTORIAL: FLASH
CREATE A MATRIX TEXT EFFECT FOR YOUR SITE

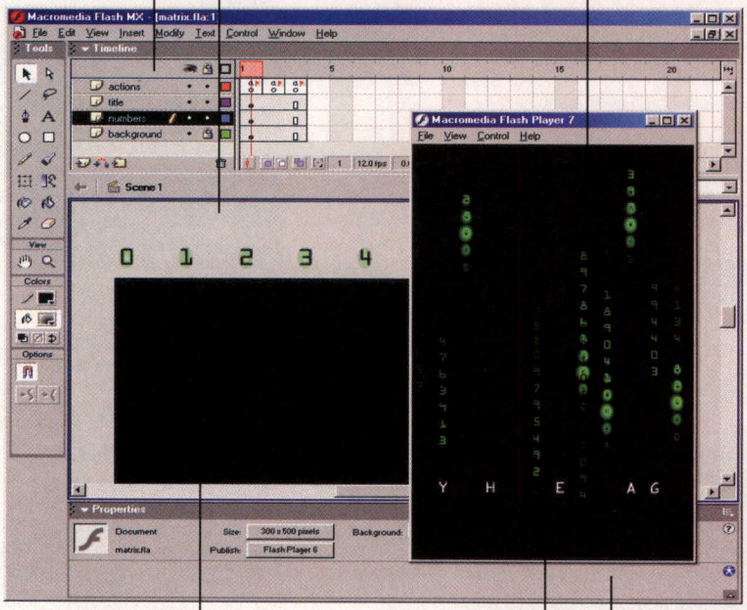
THE EXPERT: DANNY McALEER

Currently working as a programmer and designer for a New Media company, Danny has been creating Web sites for six years. As a former editor of *Web Pages Made Easy*, Danny has experience of using a variety of building packages and technologies. Before all of that, though, was a power-coder with his trusty old Atari ST – a machine he still hankers after to this day.

On its own
Try to get into the habit of separating your ActionScript onto a layer of its own

Cut out interference
Your movie clip digits should be stored off-stage so that they don't interfere with the animation

Glow in the dark
Add an ellipse to the number with a radial fill to give the text a glowing effect



In the loop
Frame 3 contains one line of script: gotoAndPlay(2);. This ensures Flash loops and repeatedly plays frame 2

Fade away
As the text tumbles it fades out. This is achieved using motion tweening and the Tint or Alpha tool

Spell it out
With a bit of extra animation you could make the tumbling text spell out your site name

CREATE A MATRIX TEXT EFFECT FOR YOUR SITE

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Recreate *The Matrix* streaming text effect for your site

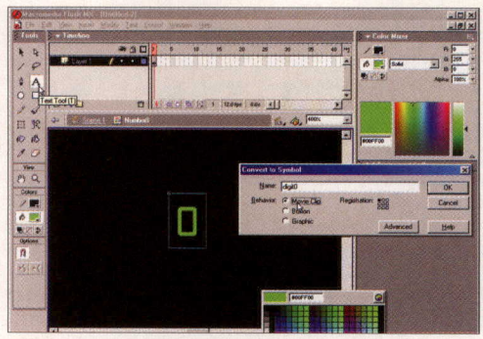
SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
30 minutes

ON THE DISC
Flash/Tutorials:
matrix.fla
matric.swf

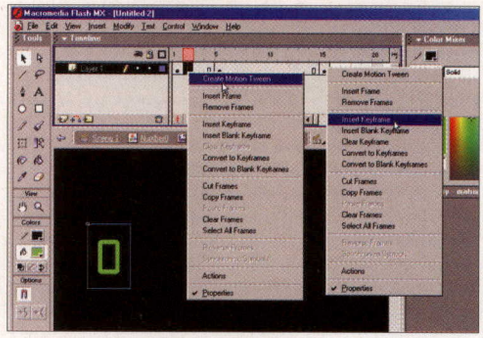
Use Macromedia Flash MX to recreate a similar effect to the streaming text made famous by *The Matrix* films

Inspiration for your site can come in many guises, be it books, posters, TV or film. One of the more iconic visuals of recent years is the tumbling text from *The Matrix*. While you could recreate this using simple animation techniques, it would be really tedious, and the finished effect would always be the same. So instead, we're going to try a bit of ActionScript in Flash, and generate a completely random animation on the fly. Although a working knowledge of ActionScript will be helpful to understand how the effect is generated, the original FLA movie file is included on the cover CD for you to play with. However, before you start, you'll need to set up the main timeline with separate layers for your number elements, the ActionScript and the background. Also, you'll need three frames. The first is used to initialise a bunch of numbers; the second contains the main elements; the third is there to tell Flash to skip frame one and play frame two over and over. You'll get a better idea of how this arrangement works by looking at the example files on the cover CD. ■



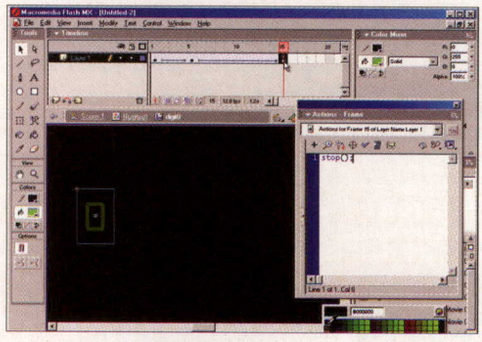
1 MAKING UP THE NUMBERS

First of all you'll need to create some characters to add to your matrix. Insert a new Graphic symbol called Number0, and on the stage, type 0 using a computer-style typeface such as OCRA or similar. Set the size and colour as appropriate and then, with the text still selected, press F8.



2 ANIMATING THE TEXT

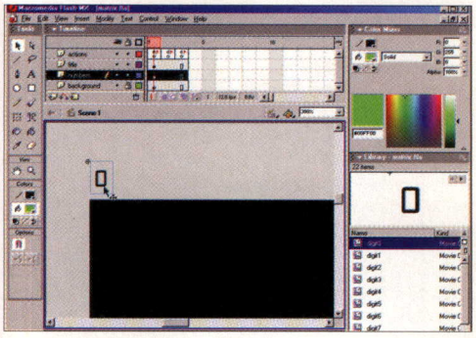
From your graphic, create a new Movie Clip symbol and call it digit0. In your new movie clip timeline, add a keyframe to frame 3 and another to around frame 15. Now right-click between the first two keyframes and choose Insert Motion Tween from the pop-up menu.



3 TINTING YOUR TEXT

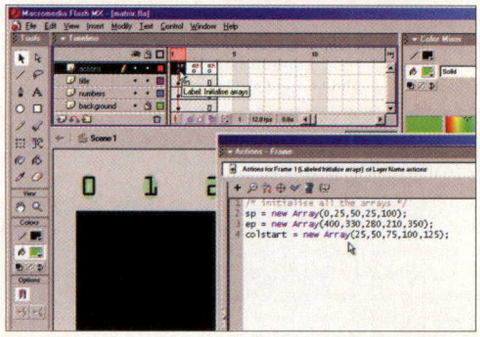
Select the instance of your graphic on frame 1, and pick the Tint effect from the Colour menu in the Properties panel. Set it to black and 100%. Create an identical motion tween between frames 3 and 15, but this time apply the Tint to the last frame. Put a stop(); command in the end frame.

CREATE A MATRIX TEXT EFFECT FOR YOUR SITE



4 NAME YOUR INSTANCES

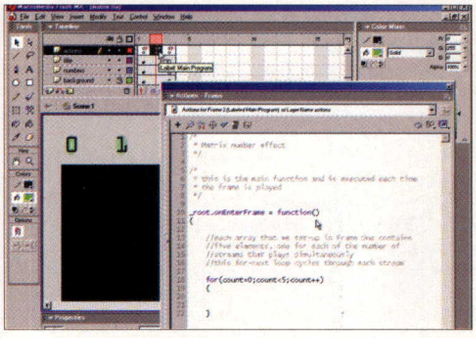
Flip back to the main timeline. Select the movie clip instance you've just edited and set its instance name to digit0 in the Properties panel. This is important. Now move it off the stage. Repeat these steps to create more number clips (up to 9), calling the new instances digit1, digit2 and so on.



```
/* Initialise all the arrays */
sp = new Array(0,25,50,25,100);
ep = new Array(400,330,280,210,350);
colstart = new Array(25,50,75,100,125);
```

5 MAKING ARRAYS

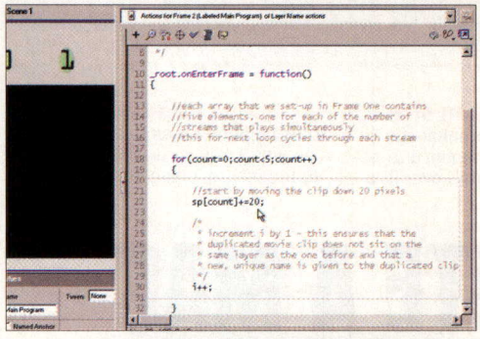
Insert a new layer for your actions. In the first frame of this timeline we're going to set up some arrays to hold the X and Y positions of all the number flows that will appear in the animation. Set up new arrays (and populate with five initial values) for the Y-axis start and end points, and the X axis.



```
/* Matrix number effect
*/
/*
* main is the main function and is executed each time
* the frame is played
*/
_root.onEnterFrame = function()
{
//each array that we set-up in Frame One contains
//five elements, one for each of the number of
//streams that plays simultaneously
//this for-next loop cycles through each stream
for(count=0;count<5;count++)
{
}
```

6 THE MAIN PROGRAM

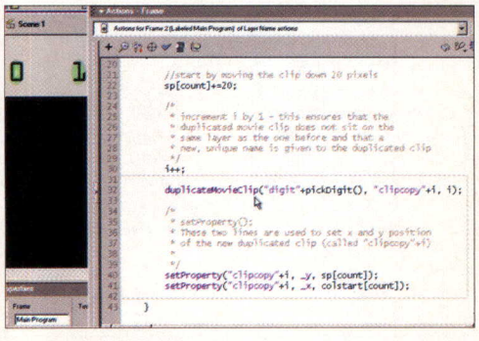
Add keyframes in frame 2 and 3 of the Actions layer. In frame 3 enter gotoAndPlay(2);. The main function, which is repeatedly run, will be in frame 2 (using onEnterFrame). It starts with a for-next loop, where the number of loops corresponds to the number of elements in your arrays.



```
_root.onEnterFrame = function()
{
//each array that we set-up in Frame One contains
//five elements, one for each of the number of
//streams that plays simultaneously
//this for-next loop cycles through each stream
for(count=0;count<5;count++)
{
//start by moving the clip down 20 pixels
sp[count]+=20;
/*
* increment i by 1 - this ensures that the
* duplicated movie clip does not sit on the
* same layer as the one before and that a
* new, unique name is given to the duplicated clip
*/
i++;
}
```

7 STREAMING TEXT DOWNWARDS

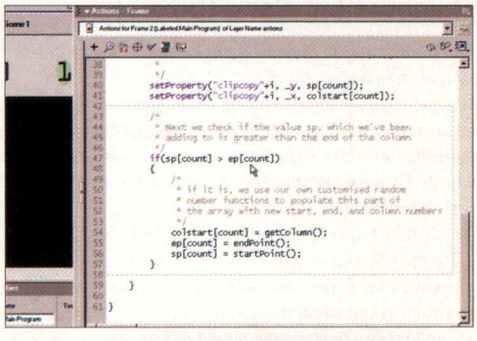
First of all you need to increment the horizontal co-ordinates of each clip to give the effect that the numbers are falling. Also, increment the counter i. This is used so that a unique name and layer are given to each new duplicated movie clip that we're about to create.



```
//start by moving the clip down 20 pixels
sp[count]+=20;
/*
* increment i by 1 - this ensures that the
* duplicated movie clip does not sit on the
* same layer as the one before and that a
* new, unique name is given to the duplicated clip
*/
i++;
duplicateMovieClip("digit"+pickDigit(), "clipcopy"+i, i);
/*
* setProperty();
* These two lines are used to set x and y position
* of the new duplicated clip (called "clipcopy"+i)
*
*/
setProperty("clipcopy"+i, _y, sp[count]);
setProperty("clipcopy"+i, _x, colstart[count]);
}
```

8 DUPLICATE AND PLACE CLIPS

To make lots of copies of the number movie clips use duplicateMovieClip("digit"+pickDigit(), "cliptocopy"+i, i);. The first argument adds a random number to the end of a digit to give the name of one of the clips you created earlier. Use setProperty to position the duplicated clip.

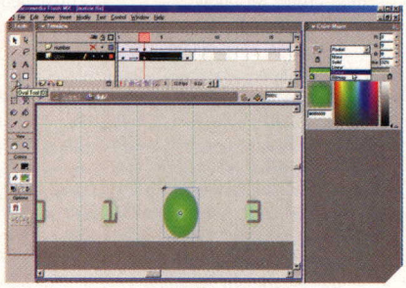


```
setProperty("clipcopy"+i, _y, sp[count]);
setProperty("clipcopy"+i, _x, colstart[count]);
/*
* Next we check if the value sp, which we've been
* adding to is greater than the end of the column
*/
if(sp[count] > ep[count])
{
/*
* if it is, we use our own customised random
* number functions to populate this part of
* the array with new start, end, and column numbers
*/
colstart[count] = getColumn();
ep[count] = endPoint();
sp[count] = startPoint();
}
}
}
```

9 GENERATING RANDOM NUMBERS

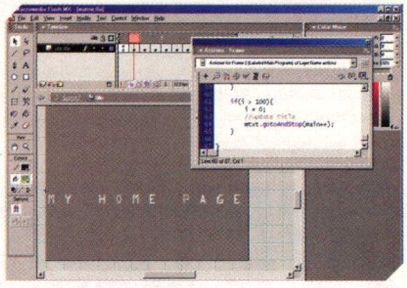
The start and end points as well as the column that the number trail falls down are random, and are created using the Math.random() function. Here, once the tumbling numbers has reached the end point, it resets the array with a bunch of new random numbers ready to start over.

EXPERT ADVICE



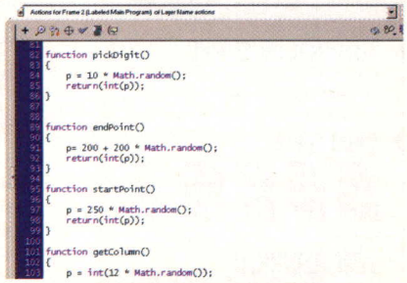
MAKING YOUR NUMBERS GLOW

Open one of your number movie clips and create a new layer. Select the Oval tool, set the border to No Fill and use the Colour Mixer to set the inside to a Radial fill. Make the outside the same colour as the background (with an alpha of 0%), and the inside to the same as the text. Draw an ellipse underneath the number on frame 3 and convert to a Graphic symbol. Copy this onto frames 1 and 7 and use motion tweening to make the glow fade in and out.



INSERTING A MESSAGE

You can use the streaming text to spell out words at the bottom of the page. To do this, create a new movie clip and on each frame of the animation, add a new letter. Use the i counter trap to move along the word's own timeline so that letters are added gradually.



```
function pickDigit()
{
p = 10 * Math.random();
return(int(p));
}
function endPoint()
{
p= 200 + 200 * Math.random();
return(int(p));
}
function startPoint()
{
p = 250 * Math.random();
return(int(p));
}
function getColumn()
{
p = int(12 * Math.random());
```

THE MATH.RANDOM() FUNCTION

The functions at the bottom of the ActionScript generate random numbers of a certain range. For example, pickDigit() selects a number between 0 and 9 so that one of the 10 movie clips can be selected and copied to the number streams. Because the Flash Math.random() function returns a number between 0 and 1, multiply it by the maximum number you want: p=10*Math.random();. Also, since it returns a floating point number, you need to use the int() function to convert it to an integer.

TUTORIAL: FLASH
GIVE YOUR SITE A MAC OS X-STYLE DOCK BAR

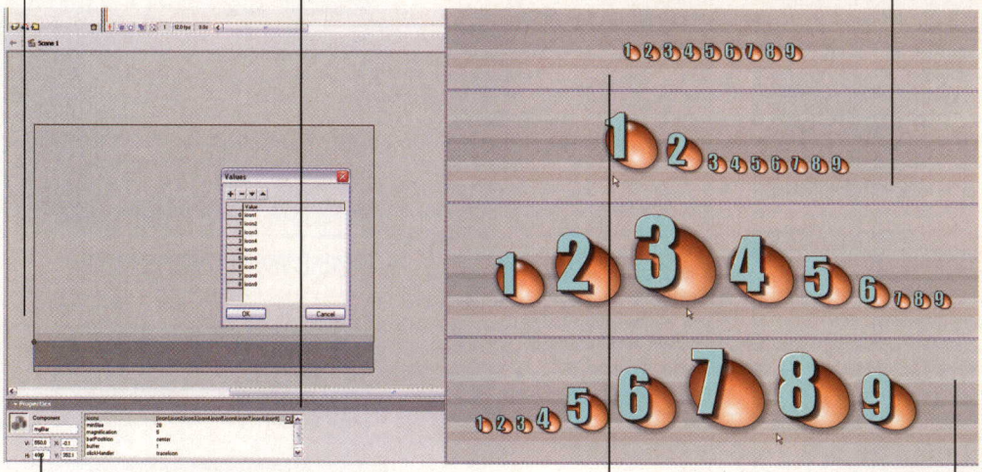
THE EXPERT: TODD YARD

Originally from Pheonix, Arizona, Todd first started using Flash when he moved to New York City (via an acting course in London). He now works for Daedalus Media (**www.daedalusmedia.com**) in New York, and is also lead Flash programmer at ego 7 (**www.ego7.com**). Todd is also a regular contributor to the Friends of Ed series of books, and specialises in Flash, Illustrator and Photoshop.

IconBar in Flash
The iconBar component in the Flash environment seems to be a simple rectangle

Icons Array
The Icons Array in the Properties panel stores the identifiers to any icon appearing in the iconBar

Falloff
The falloff of the iconBar controls how far from the mouse the magnification covers



Parameters
All of the iconBar's parameters can be set in the Properties pane

Minimum size
When tested, the iconBar sits unobtrusively at a minimum size until the mouse rolls over it

Repositioning
Icons reposition themselves based on which icon is currently closest to the mouse, preventing overlap

GIVE YOUR SITE A MAC OS X-STYLE DOCK BAR

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Create a docked interface iconBar with interactive magnification

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
1 hour 30 minutes

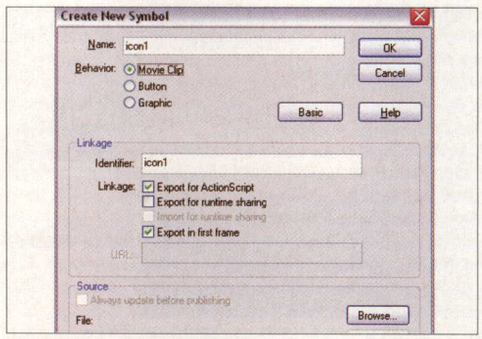
ON THE DISC
Flash/Tutorials:
complete [folder]
start [folder]

Create interfaces that are both functional and aesthetically pleasing, and develop your ActionScript know-how along the way

One of the terrific aspects of developing in Flash is the seamless integration of code and graphics. Within one environment, developers can create stunning images and interfaces that are dynamic and allow for almost unlimited interactivity through ActionScript. This provides a wonderful freedom for creative design and means that you're not limited to sterile, boxed-in interfaces. Instead, you can create fluid, animated, organic experiences.

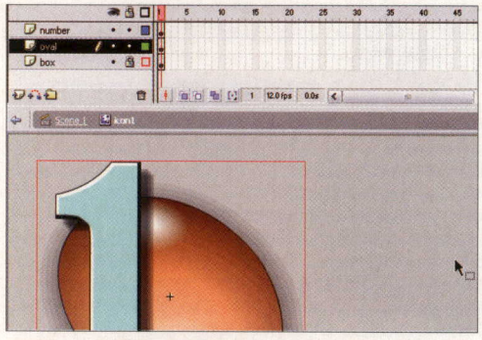
To feature the possibilities when incorporating code into design, we will recreate the sleek, magnifying iconBar that beautifully enhances the Mac OS X desktop. The ever-present bar shrinks down to a nice, compact size when unneeded, then zooms up in size when the user hovers over it. In this way it's always at hand, yet utilises a limited amount of precious screen real estate. And anyone who's seen it can attest to how cool it looks to boot!

We will make our iconBar a component within Flash, which through just a few extra lines of code will offer a flexibility and modularity that will make it well-worth the work. We will be able to drag and drop the component into any interface we create and be able to use it over and over again. ■



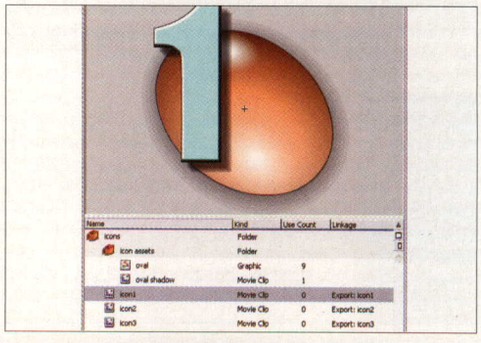
1 CREATING A PLACEHOLDER ICON

The first thing we need to make is an icon we'll attach to our iconBar. Create a new Movie Clip symbol (Ctrl & F8) named 'icon1' and Export for ActionScript with the link identifier icon1 as well. This will allow us to use attachMovie to add the icon to the stage dynamically.



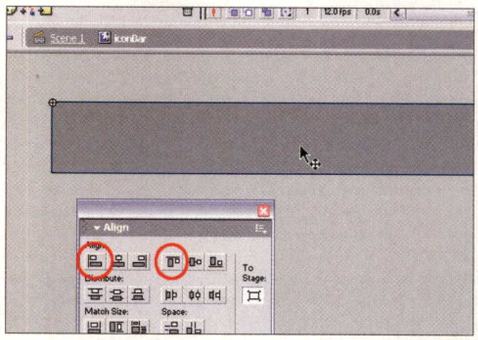
2 DRAWING THE ICON GRAPHIC

The important aspect when creating an icon graphic for our iconBar is that it is perfectly square. To accomplish this, we created a layer with a square 40x40 pixels with an alpha of 0. We then drew a bevelled number on another layer and used an oval graphic from Flash's common libraries.



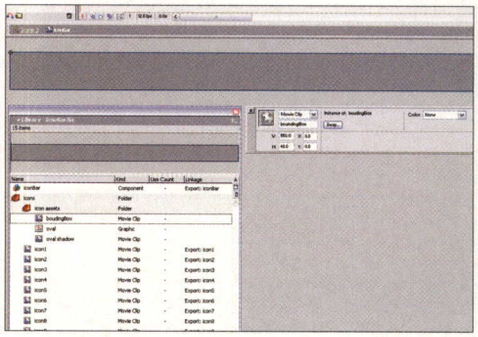
3 DUPLICATING MULTIPLE ICONS

Now that we have one icon movie clip, we can duplicate it and use it as a template for additional icons. In your library, select icon1 and duplicate it eight times, naming and exporting each additional symbol with a new number (icon2, icon3, etc). Change each symbol's graphics to suit.



4 CREATING THE ICONBAR COMPONENT

Create a new Movie Clip symbol (Ctrl & F8) named 'iconBar' with a linkage identifier of iconBar as well. In Symbol Editing mode for this new symbol, draw a 550x40 rectangle and align it using the Align panel so that the rectangle's upper left corner is on the symbol's registration point.



5 MAKING THE BOUNDING BOX

Select the rectangle you created in the last step and convert it into a movie clip (F8) named 'boundingBox'. Name the instance 'boundingBox' in the Properties panel. We will use this to position and size our iconBar on the stage.

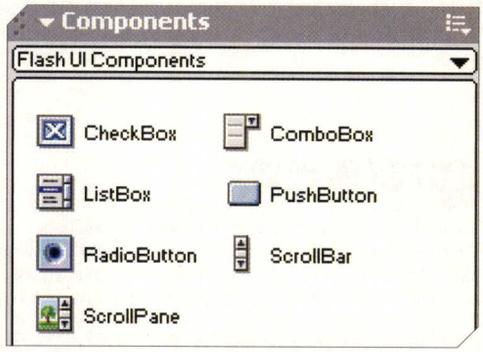
IN DETAIL: THE BENEFITS OF USING COMPONENTS

Components will give you far more flexibility and versatility when working on projects

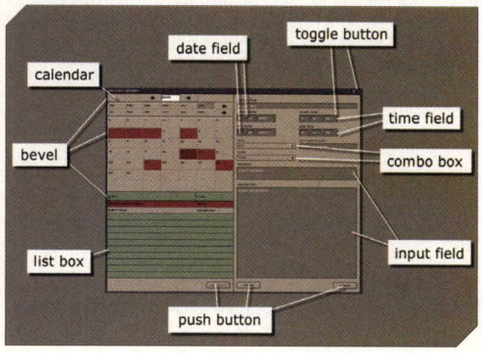
The introduction of components in Flash MX heralded a new and much more productive way for developers to work on projects. Components allow for modular development of robust interface widgets and behaviours. Building an often-used element into a component by adding just a few lines of code will mean the simple implementation of that same element into many movies with little additional work.

Components can range from simple form widgets like buttons and checkboxes to intermediate controls such as the combo box or scrollbar, to much more advanced tools like a calendar or thumbnail gallery. In addition to graphic components, you can also develop purely code-based components – movie clips full of code either creating or extending a Class. Examples of this might be a component building more functionality onto Flash's XML object, or a new Class that controls the loading and playing of movies, JPEGs, or MP3s.

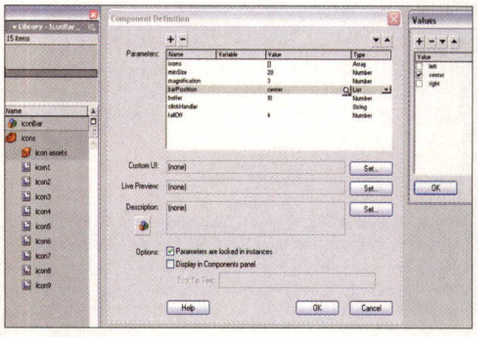
If you pop along to a site like ego7 [where the writer of this tutorial Todd Yard plies his trade] you'll find a fairly complex site. Unbeknownst to you, the firm has actually broken down almost every reusable element in their interfaces into components, from simple bevels up to complete bulletin board and gallery components. The ego7 component library actually boasts over 60 original components that are used on a daily basis, allowing the team to quickly develop and implement any ideas that come to them. ■



■ The components panel in Flash MX is fairly unassuming. If you use it properly, however, it can form the basis of your Flash exploits

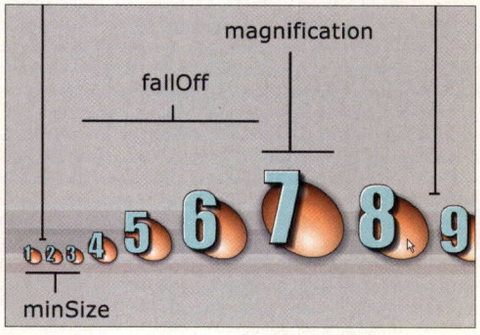


■ Web sites can be made a whole lot simpler if you create individual components first. As an example, this page has nine components



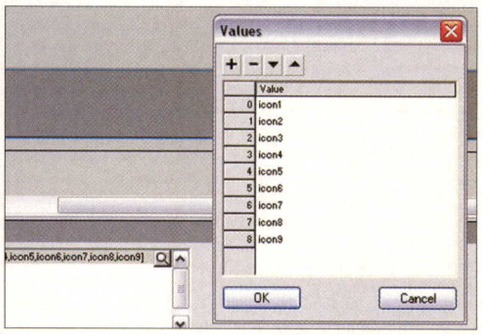
6 ADDING COMPONENT PARAMETERS

Select the iconBar symbol in your library and right-click or Command & click to select and access the Component Definition... dialog box. Click the Plus button at the top of the box to add new parameters to our component, following the diagram accompanying this step.



7 EXPLORING THE PARAMETERS

Let's look at parameters. Icons: array of identifiers for icon symbols; minSize: size of small icons; magnification: times icons will magnify; barPosition: horizontal alignment of icons; buffer: distance between icons; clickHandler: function called when an icon is clicked; falloff: distance from mouse that magnification covers.



8 SETTING OUR BAR'S PARAMETERS

Back on the main timeline, drag an iconBar symbol from your library onto the bottom of the stage. With the instance selected, set its parameters to match the accompanying diagram. Note we're populating the Icons Array with the identifiers of all the icon symbols we made earlier.

GIVE YOUR SITE A MAC OS X-STYLE DOCK BAR

```
#initclip

function IconBarClass() {
    this.init();
}

Object.registerClass("iconBar", IconBarClass);

#endinitclip
```

9 NOW TO THE CODE!

These lines of code are needed to make a component. The bookends #initclip and #endinitclip tell Flash to initialise this code before the first frame of the movie. The main function IconBarClass acts as our Class constructor, and the registerClass call associates our iconBar symbol with this Class.

```
#initclip

function IconBarClass() {
    this.init();
}

IconBarClass.prototype = new MovieClip();

Object.registerClass("iconBar", IconBarClass);

#endinitclip
```

10 ACCESSING THE PROTOTYPE

With this line, we set the prototype property of our new IconBarClass to equal a new MovieClip instance. This is Flash's way of assigning inheritance, so any IconBarClass instance we create can access any of the standard movie clip properties and methods (and we don't have to rewrite them).

```
#initclip

function IconBarClass() {
    this.init();
}

IconBarClass.prototype = new MovieClip();

IconBarClass.prototype.init = function() {
    this.width = this._width;
    this.height = this._height;
    this._xscale = this._yscale = 100;
    this.boundingBox.unloadMovie();
    this.iconClips = [];
    this.createEmptyMovieClip("iconHolder", 0);
    this.addIcons();
    this.drawHitArea();
};

Object.registerClass("iconBar", IconBarClass);

#endinitclip
```

11 INITIALISING THE COMPONENT

In the Init function, which we called in our constructor, we initialise variables we'll access in our code. Notice we're resetting the scale of our clip to 100% but recording the width and height first. This lets a developer use the Transformation tools to set the size of the component without affecting scale.

```
IconBarClass.prototype = new MovieClip();

IconBarClass.prototype.init = function() {
    this.width = this._width;
    this.height = this._height;
    this._xscale = this._yscale = 100;
    this.boundingBox.unloadMovie();
    this.iconClips = [];
    this.createEmptyMovieClip("iconHolder", 0);
    this.tweenRate = 2;
    this.mouseRange = this.minSize/2 + this.buffer/2;
    this._baseY = this.height - this.minSize/2;
    this.addIcons();
    this.drawHitArea();
};

Object.registerClass("iconBar", IconBarClass);

#endinitclip
```

12 IMPORTANT VARIABLES

Three variables to access in other methods: tweenRate controls how fast icons tween back when the mouse leaves. mouseRange is pixel distance to either side of the icon that controls the focus (half the icon's width plus half the buffer between icons). _baseY is the _y position of minimum-sized icons.

```
#initclip

function IconBarClass() {
    this.init();
}

IconBarClass.prototype = new MovieClip();

IconBarClass.prototype.addIcons = function() {
    for (var i = 0; i < this.icons.length; i++) {
        var icon = this.iconHolder.attachMovie(this.icons[i], "icon" + i, i);
        icon._height = icon._width = this.minSize;
        icon._x = i*this.minSize + i*this.buffer + this.minSize/2;
        icon._y = this._baseY;
        icon.value = this.icons[i];
        this.iconClips.push(icon);
    }
    this._baseScale = icon._xscale;
};

IconBarClass.prototype.init = function() {
    this.width = this._width;
    this.height = this._height;
    this._xscale = this._yscale = 100;
    this.boundingBox.unloadMovie();
    this.iconClips = [];
    this.createEmptyMovieClip("iconHolder", 0);
    this.tweenRate = 2;
```

13 ADDING THE ICONS

This function runs through our list and attaches each icon, with the _x position calculated for each (_width, _height and _y position are constant). Each icon stores its name in a value property and a reference to each clip is stored in the iconClips Array. _baseScale holds the scale of our clips at minimum size.

```
IconBarClass.prototype.addIcons = function() {
    for (var i = 0; i < this.icons.length; i++) {
        var icon = this.iconHolder.attachMovie(this.icons[i], "ico
        icon._height = icon._width = this.minSize;
        icon._x = i*this.minSize + i*this.buffer + this.minSize/2;
        icon._y = this._baseY;
        icon.value = this.icons[i];
        this.iconClips.push(icon);
    }
    this._baseScale = icon._xscale;
    switch (this.barPosition) {
        case "right":
            var xOffset = this.width - this.iconHolder._width;
            break;
        case "center":
            var xOffset = this.width/2 - this.iconHolder._width/2;
            break;
    }
    for (var i in this.iconClips) {
        var c = this.iconClips[i];
        c._baseX = (c._x += xOffset);
    }
};

IconBarClass.prototype.init = function() {
    this.width = this._width;
    this.height = this._height;
```

14 OFFSETTING FOR THE BAR POSITION

Adding to the addIcons function, we look to the barPosition variable in order to offset our icons. Basically, if the position is either centre or right, we need to move each icon over, based on the width of the bar. Test your movie now to see the icons successfully placed!

```
        var c = this.iconClips[i];
        c._baseX = (c._x += xOffset);
    }
};

IconBarClass.prototype.drawHitArea = function() {
    var h = this.createEmptyMovieClip("hitClip", 1);
    h._y = this.height;
    h.beginFill(0, 0);
    h.lineTo(this.width, 0);
    h.lineTo(this.width, -this.minSize);
    h.lineTo(0, -this.minSize);
    h.endFill();
    h.onRollOver = this.rollOverIcons;
    h.onRollOut = h.onDragOut = this.rollOutIcons;
    h.onRelease = this.checkRelease;
    h.useHandCursor = 0;
};

IconBarClass.prototype.init = function() {
    this.width = this._width;
```

15 MOUSE INTERACTIVITY

We called two functions in our Init. Here's the second. This uses the width and height of the bar to draw an invisible box on the stage. This box will have the mouse methods that allow for interactivity. We add those methods to the onRollOver, onRollOut, onDragOut and onRelease event handlers.

```
};

IconBarClass.prototype.init = function() {
    this.width = this._width;
    this.height = this._height;
    this._xscale = this._yscale = 100;
    this.boundingBox.unloadMovie();
    this.iconClips = [];
    this.createEmptyMovieClip("iconHolder", 0);
    this.tweenRate = 2;
    this.mouseRange = this.minSize/2 + this.buffer/2;
    this._baseY = this.height - this.minSize/2;
    this.addIcons();
    this.drawHitArea();
};

IconBarClass.prototype.rollOverIcons = function() {
    this._height = this._parent.minSize*this._parent.magnification;
    clearInterval(this._parent.tweenInterval);
    clearInterval(this.checkMouseInterval);
    this.checkMouseInterval = setInterval(this._parent, "checkMouse", 40);
};

Object.registerClass("iconBar", IconBarClass);

#endinitclip
```

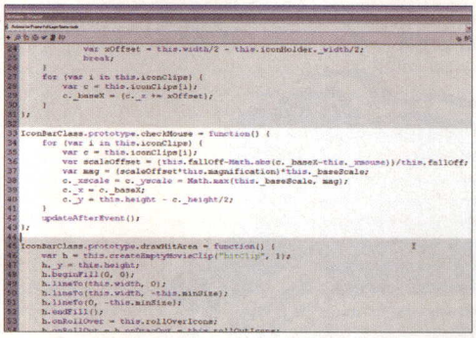
16 ONROLLOVER

When our invisible box is rolled over, it grows to the maximum magnification. If it didn't, the magnifying icons would grow outside the box's hit area. We set a new interval (after making sure it's cleared) called 'checkMouse' method every 40 milliseconds. We'll discuss the other interval next.

```
    this.height = this._height;
    this._xscale = this._yscale = 100;
    this.boundingBox.unloadMovie();
    this.iconClips = [];
    this.createEmptyMovieClip("iconHolder", 0);
    this.tweenRate = 2;
    this.mouseRange = this.minSize/2 + this.buffer/2;
    this._baseY = this.height - this.minSize/2;
    this.addIcons();
    this.drawHitArea();
};

IconBarClass.prototype.rollOutIcons = function() {
    this._xscale = 100;
    clearInterval(this.checkMouseInterval);
    clearInterval(this._parent.tweenInterval);
    this._parent.tweenInterval = setInterval(this._parent, "tweenToBase", 40);
};

IconBarClass.prototype.rollOverIcons = function() {
    this._height = this._parent.minSize*this._parent.magnification;
    clearInterval(this._parent.tweenInterval);
    clearInterval(this.checkMouseInterval);
    this.checkMouseInterval = setInterval(this._parent, "checkMouse", 40);
};

Object.registerClass("iconBar", IconBarClass);
```

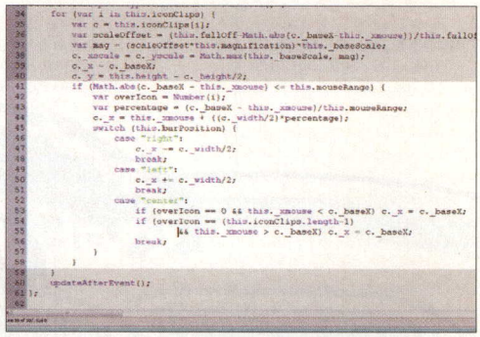
17 ONROLLOUT

When the user moves the mouse outside the invisible box, we need to stop checking for the mouse position and shrink our box down do its minimum size. We also need to tween our icons back down to their minSize. This is the other interval that we set here.



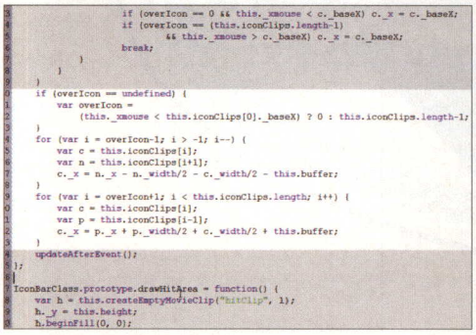
18 CHECKING THE MOUSE POSITION

By far the most complex method, we will break checkMouse into several steps. First, we run through each icon and determine its scale depending on the icon's relation to the mouse. The closer the mouse is to an icon, the greater its scale will be. We set the _y position based on its new height.



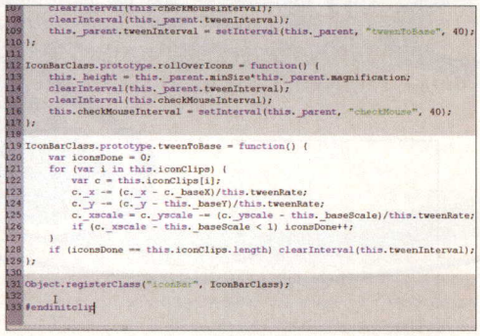
19 FINDING THE NEAREST ICON

Here we check to see which icon falls within the mouseRange distance. This is the icon we need to reposition all other icons around. We determine its _x position based on its current distance from the mouse, offsetting it depending on the barPosition variable.



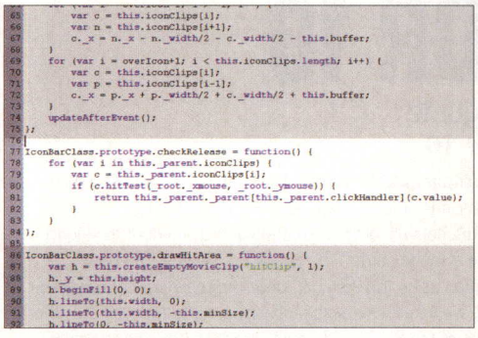
20 REPOSITIONING THE ICONS

Once we have our overIcon set (and if it's not, we use a quick If statement to determine if the mouse is on the left or right of our bar), we run through all the remaining icons and reposition them based on their and their neighbours' scale, with the buffer thrown in to space things correctly.



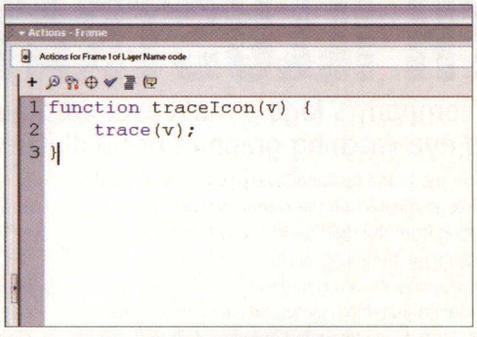
21 TWEENING BACK INTO POSITION

This function is called when the user rolls off the bar. It runs through each icon and quickly scales and repositions it by half the remaining value/distance of each function call. When all of the icons are back, the interval is cleared. Test and see!



22 ADDING CLICK ACTIONS

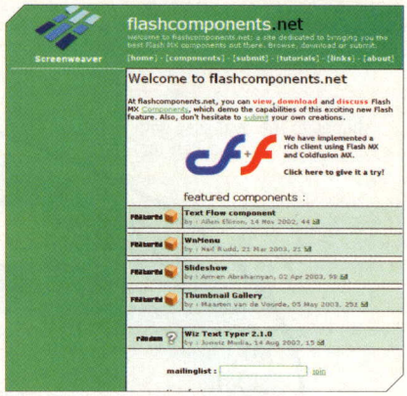
Our final piece is to allow the user to click on an icon and have it do something. When our invisible box is clicked on, we run through each icon and see which one is being clicked. We send that icon's value property to whatever clickHandler we set for the iconBar.



23 TESTING THE CLICKHANDLER

Back on the main timeline (not inside the component), we add the traceIcon function, which we set for the clickHandler of the bar way back in step eight. Test your movie and click on a magnified icon to see everything working perfectly and beautifully!

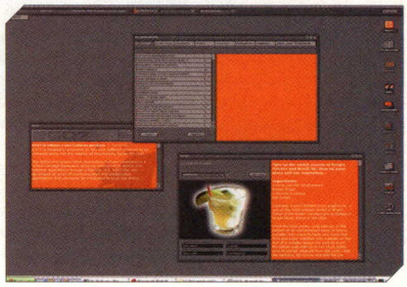
BOOKMARKS



FLASH COMPONENTS.NET

www.flashcomponents.net

This is one of the finest sites that provides free Flash components, with an amazing array for you to download. You'll find everything from tooltips to 3D engines here.



EGO7

www.ego7.com

If you really want to see what can be accomplished with components working together, check out the ego7 site. Ninety-nine percent of all you'll find here was made with components.

GEEK SPEAK

PROTOTYPE

In Flash, the Prototype property of a Class is an object that holds references to all of the Class's methods and properties. It's a way to 'share' properties and methods for each instance of a Class without duplicating the code. Every Class has a built-in prototype property that you can add to when extending the Class.

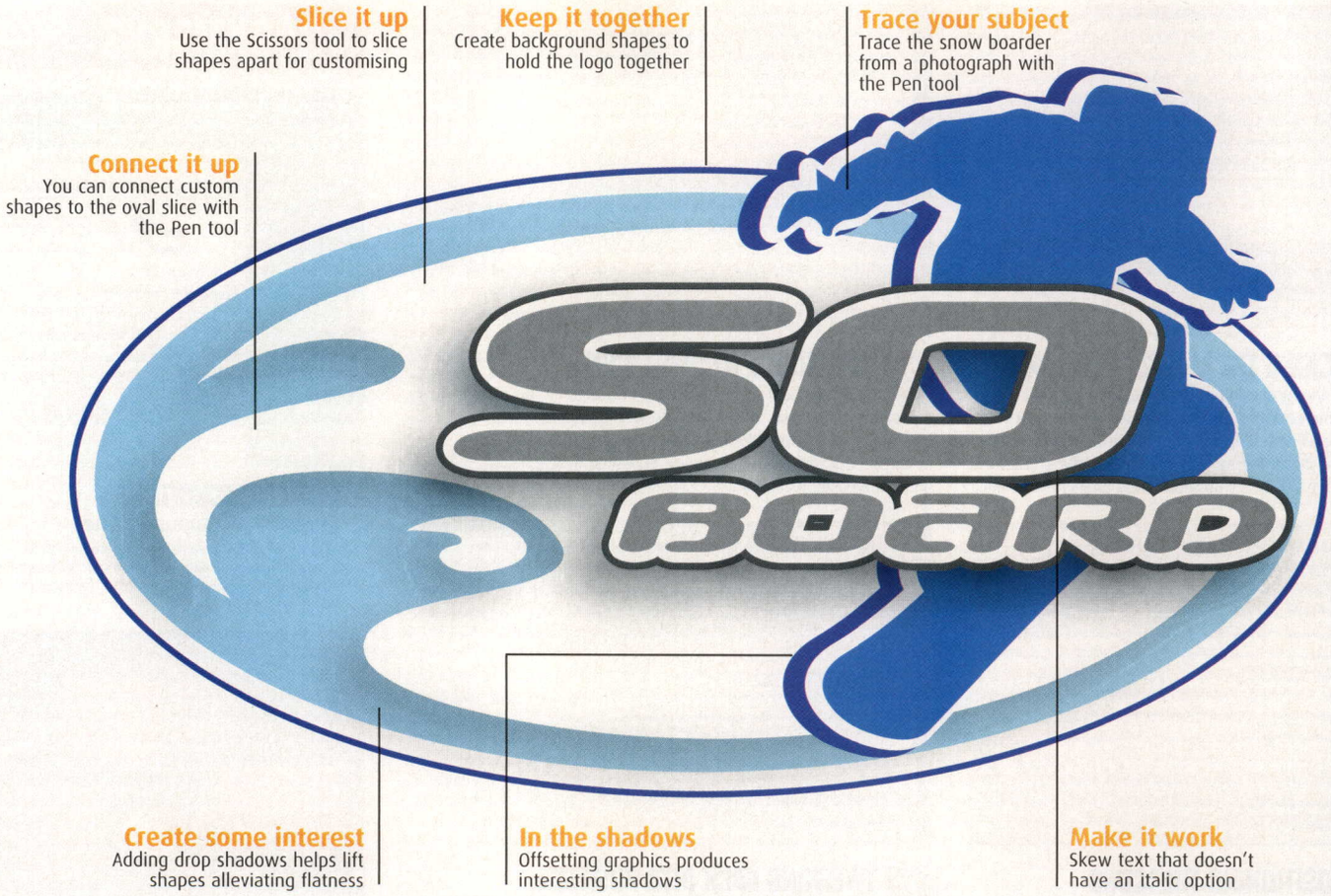
INHERITANCE

When you create Classes in Flash, you can choose to have your Class gain the properties and methods from another Class. You do this by setting the Prototype property of your new Class to equal a new instance of another Class. This needs to be done before you add your own properties and methods to the Prototype property, or your properties and methods will be overridden.

TUTORIAL: ILLUSTRATION
CREATE A STUNNING LOGO WITH ILLUSTRATOR 10

THE EXPERT: MARK SHUFFLEBOTTOM

Mark teaches on the BA Hons Interactive Media course at Bournemouth University, and has been a regular contributor to *Practical Internet* for many issues. Although Mark comes from a print background – he is a former designer of *PI* – he is now much more involved in Web design technology, and specialises in everything from Flash design through to 3D graphics and PHP.



THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Create a logo for a snowboarding company with Adobe Illustrator

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
45 minutes

ON THE DISC
Illustration/ Tutorial files:
board-rider.jpg
so-board.ai

CREATE A STUNNING LOGO WITH ILLUSTRATOR 10

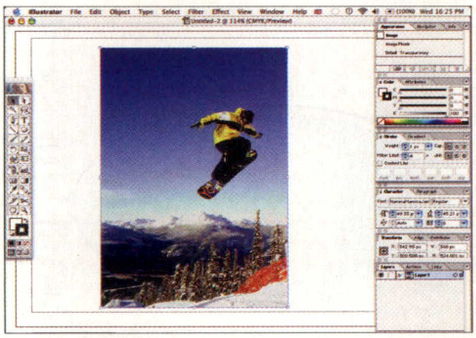
Give your company's logo a makeover with our guide to creating eye-catching graphics using Illustrator 10

Logos are the brand image of every company. A good brand image means that the company will gain recognition from the right people, which in turn means success for the company. Designing logos can be a lengthy process, and the best way of going about it is to decide upon the idea on paper, and then convert that into a piece of digital artwork. This allows you to transfer the logo to printed business cards, letterheads and probably most importantly of all, to a Web site.

The great advantage about using Illustrator to create your logo is that, once you have the design, it can be easily used anywhere. For example, keep the graphic in vector format and take it into Flash so that it can be animated for Web content or save it as a GIF to be used as a static Web logo. If you'd prefer, you can just as easily save it as an Encapsulated Postscript File so that it can be placed on business cards or letterheads for commercial print.

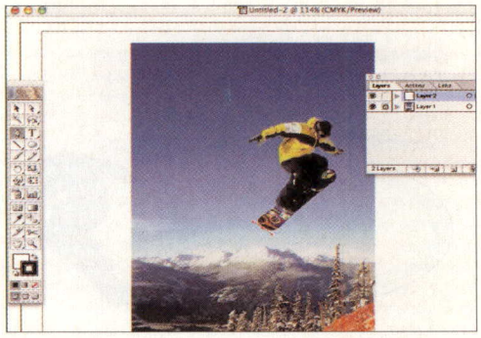
This tutorial will focus on creating a focus point of the logo – in this case a snowboarder. The image has been traced from a photograph using the Pen tool. Once the snowboarder has been created, we'll look at creating a background to hang all the other elements of the logo on. This will consist of cutting apart an oval and drawing in some fancy flames to add to the style of the boarder, but we'll keep these within the overall shape of the oval. Once those elements are in place, it's then a simple job of dropping in some text together with a few choice drop shadows on certain elements. Once all that's out of the way, it's ready to be used to promote the company's brand.

TUTORIAL: ILLUSTRATION
CREATE A STUNNING LOGO WITH ILLUSTRATOR 10



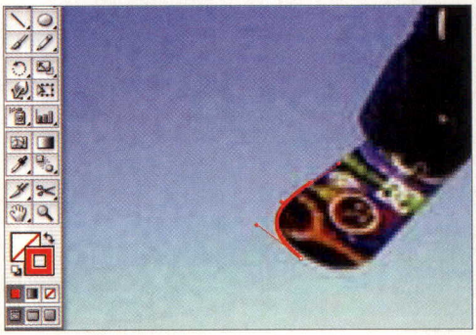
1 OPEN UP AND BEGIN

Start Illustrator 10 and choose New from the File menu. You can make this page A4 as size isn't too important when creating logos because they can then be scaled up or down. From the File menu, choose Place and import 'board-rider.jpg' from the cover CD.



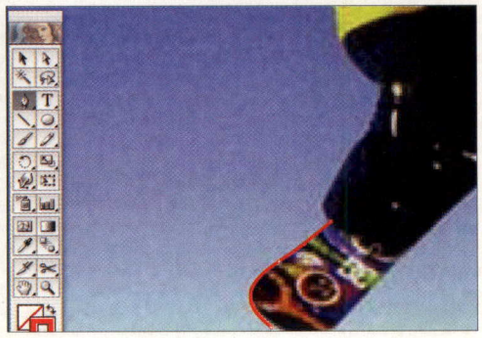
2 USE THE PEN TOOL

In the Layers palette, lock layer 1 and click on the New Layer icon to create a new layer. From the toolbar, select the Pen tool and click on the side of the board. Continue to hold the mouse button down and then drag to the right as shown in the screenshot.



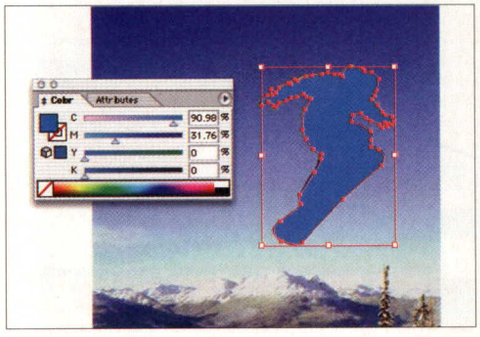
3 ROUND THE BEND

It's usually a good idea to zoom in to get a better view so press Ctrl & + on a PC or Apple & + on a Mac to zoom in. Now position the pen just around the top corner of the snowboard and click and drag – still holding the mouse button down – in the direction of the board.



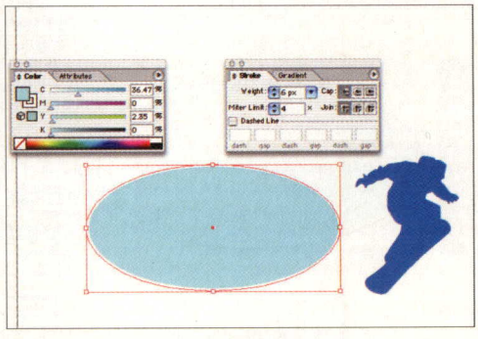
4 A TIGHT CORNER

Now click once without holding the mouse down to get a sharp corner at the point where the board meets the trouser line. Continue around the outside edge of the board rider until you have gone all the way around and created a silhouette outline image.



5 DELETE THE PHOTO

Click on the fill colour and change this to a mid-blue using the colour mixer. Now click on the stroke colour and change this to none by clicking the square with a red line through it. The background layer can be dragged to the Trash icon in the Layer palette to remove it.



6 DRAW AN OVAL SHAPE

Using the Oval tool on the toolbar, draw an oval shape and then choose a light blue colour for the fill and a six pixel stroke for the outside edge. Now with the oval selected, go to the Object menu, choose Arrange and then Send to Back.

GEEK SPEAK

STROKE

This has nothing to do with touching up the edges of graphics but instead refers to the outer edge of the graphic which can have a custom line and width applied, giving the graphic a stroked edge. Strokes can be useful for adding emphasis to certain graphics.

FILL

The fill refers to the inside colour of a graphic. This needn't be just a plain colour – it can be a gradient or a pattern, which helps to reduce the flat look sometimes attributed to vector graphics.

BEZIER CURVES

Bezier curves are curves created by the Pen tool. They have handles which dictate the direction and smoothness of the curve. The handles are not the curve itself but pointers which define the shape of the curve. Because these curves are easily editable, this is makes them an extremely useful skill to master.

DROP SHADOW

A drop shadow is actually a raster effect which is pixel-based, as opposed to the vector art being created in the tutorial. Drop shadows help emphasise certain elements in the composition and manage to 'lift' graphics. The drop shadow effect is extremely useful and can be fully customised using the pop-up menu that appears when the effect is applied.

EXPERT ADVICE

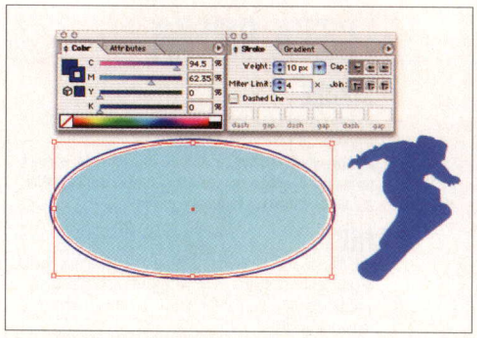
AMENDING CURVES

Creating Bezier curves with the Pen tool is one of the most difficult parts of Illustrator for newbies. Don't despair if it doesn't immediately look right, as you very rarely get these curves bang on first time out. Either hold down the Alt key while using the Pen tool or change to the Direct Selection tool and you will be able to edit the points and swing the handles round until you get things just right.

DETAILED SHADING

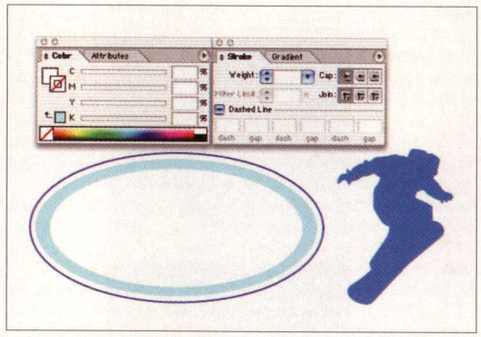
The most detailed shading that you can produce can be created in Illustrator using the Gradient Mesh tool. Select the Gradient Mesh from the toolbar and click inside your graphic to see it split into a mesh. Now choose a different fill colour and this will blend with the colour surrounding it from the point you clicked. Click again and you can add further colours to build up complex blends.

CREATE A STUNNING LOGO WITH ILLUSTRATOR 10



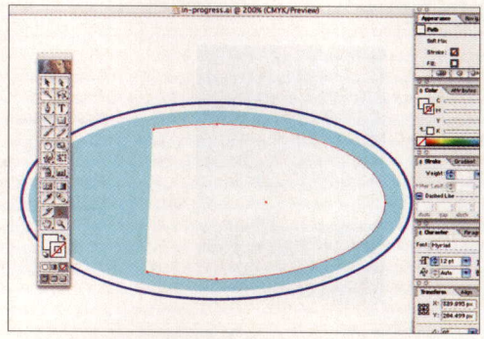
7 PASTE BEHIND

With the oval shape selected, copy the shape by pressing Ctrl & C on a PC and Apple & C on a Mac. Now paste behind by pressing Ctrl & B on a PC and Apple & B on a Mac. Increase the stroke width to 10 pixels and change the colour to a a dark blue.



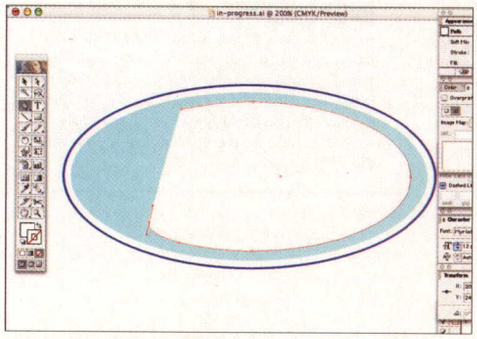
8 PASTE IN FRONT

Select the front oval and copy as before but this time we need to paste directly in front, so press Ctrl & F on the PC or Apple & F on the Mac. Turn the stroke off and make the fill white, then hold down Shift and Alt while dragging a corner handle to scale down from the centre.



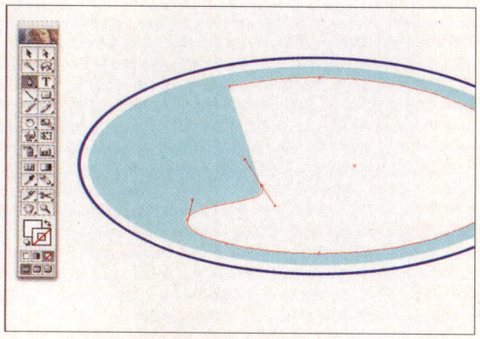
9 GRAB THE SCISSORS

Zoom in to 200% to get a better view and then select the Scissors tool. Once selected, click on the outside edge of the path as shown above at the top and bottom – this will slice the path in two. Select the left-hand side and press Delete on the keyboard.



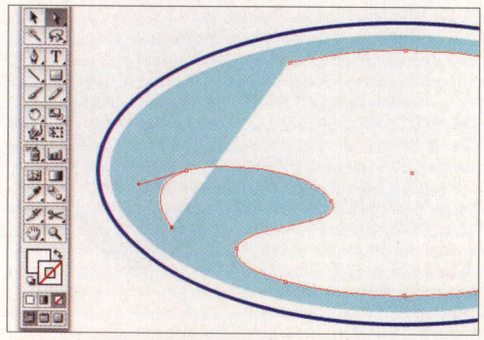
10 PICK UP THE PEN

Select the Pen tool from the toolbar and then click on the point of the cut path at the bottom of the oval. This will pick up that point so you can continue drawing. Click and hold the mouse down and drag the handle upwards as shown above.



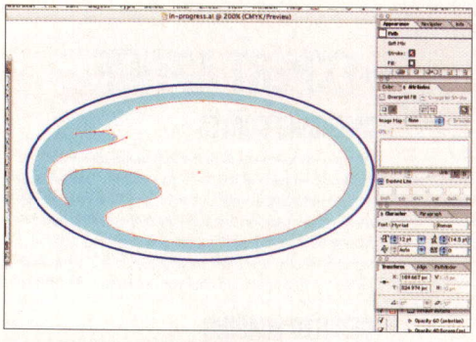
11 ADD ANOTHER POINT

Now click in the position shown above and continue to hold the mouse button down while dragging the handle towards the top left-hand corner of the screen. If you let go too soon or don't get the angle right, you can hold the Ctrl key or Apple key to change to the pointer.



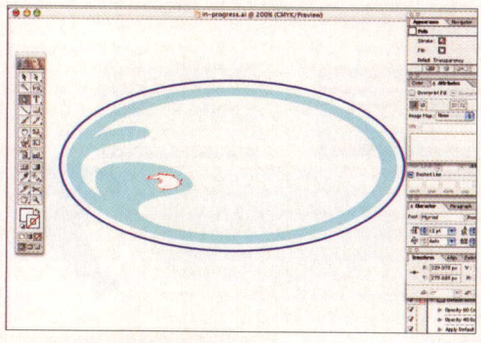
12 CONTINUE WITH THE PATH

Click and drag the handle out to the left as shown above. Now click one more time below, but this time don't drag any handles out, which will give a sharp point as opposed to the smooth curve we've been getting with the handles.



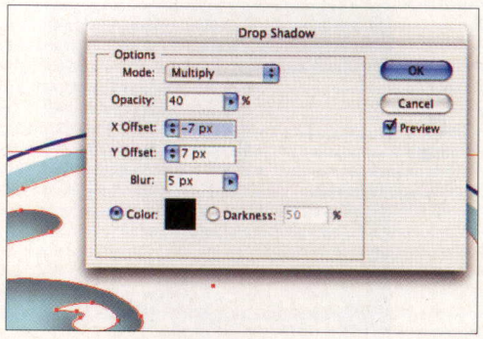
13 FOLLOW THE CURVE

Draw another point and drag out the handles while trying to follow the outer edge of the oval and the inside of the path you've just created, Add two more points as shown in the shot above, each time dragging the handle to get soft curves.



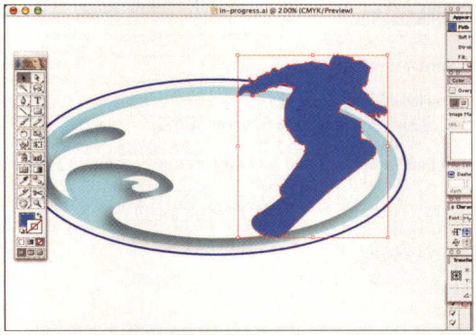
14 FINISH THE PATH

Add the last remaining points as shown above using the same technique as before. Now draw the new shape in the hole by clicking and dragging with the Pen tool. Don't worry about how long this takes and use the Direct Selection tool to amend any errors.



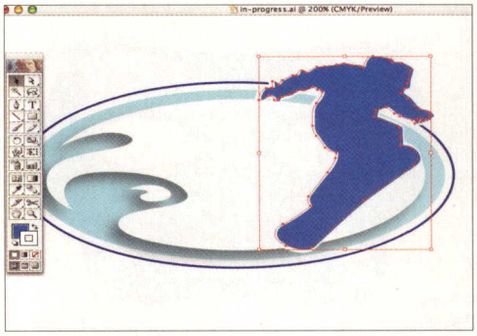
15 RAISE THE LEVEL

Shift-click on the two white graphics in the centre of the oval to select them both and then press Ctrl & G on a PC or Apple & G on a Mac to group the objects. From the Effects menu, choose Stylize and Drop Shadow, then enter the details as shown.



16 POSITION THE BOARD RIDER

Click the board rider graphic and position as shown – you will probably need to go to the Object menu and choose Arrange and Bring to Front to position the graphic on top of the background. Copy and paste behind the new graphic – this should paste directly behind the top rider graphic.



17 ADD A STROKE

You now have to add a six-pixel stroke to your new graphic and make the stroke white. Now using the keyboard, press the left cursor arrow key twice which will nudge the image two pixels to the left. Copy this graphic and then paste behind again.

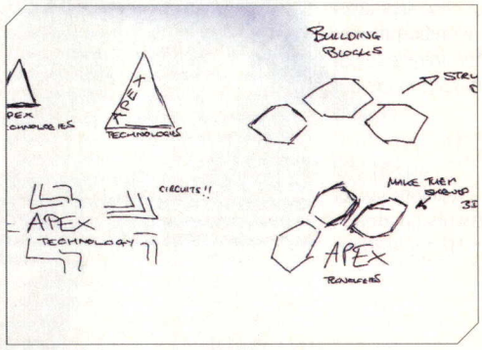
IN DETAIL: CREATING EFFECTIVE LOGOS

Good planning is at the heart of designing a successful logo

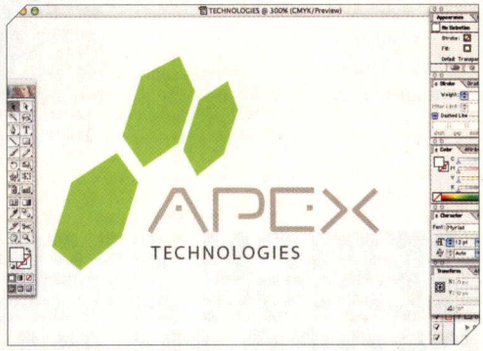
Creating a logo that works depends on your ability to get to the core of what the company in question is all about. After all, the logo will probably be used to judge the company, so you need to make sure that it gives a true impression. Be prepared to put personal feelings aside and decide what you are trying to impart visually to the viewer, to best communicate what the company is doing or selling.

It's good practice to sketch out your ideas first by hand – even if you can't draw – so that you don't waste valuable time playing with effects on the computer. The idea is what really counts, so make sure that you explore as many avenues and possibilities as you can. Refining an illustration is a lot easier than having to start again when you suddenly realise way down the line that you've been pursuing a bad idea. Never go to the computer with the attitude of 'what can these tools do for me'. You should start your design with the aim of trying to emulate the idea in your head with the graphic tools you have at your disposal. Remember you are the designer, so make the tools work for you to create the logo.

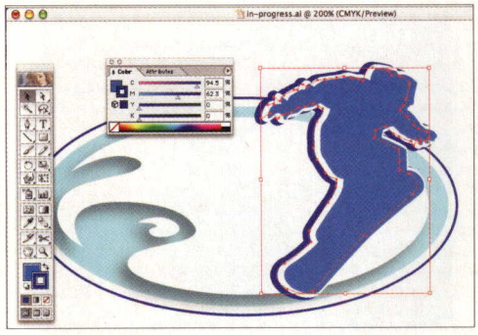
If there is any competition for your client's product, remember to check out any existing logos that have been created by other designers. After all, you always want to create a better brand image than your competitors. ■



■ Sketching out different layouts and ideas means that you will have a good sense of what works and what doesn't



■ Once you've decided on a look, you can get to work in Illustrator, knowing that you won't have to start again



18 REPOSITION THE GRAPHIC

Give your new board rider a 10 pixel stroke with a dark blue colour then nudge the graphic five pixels to the left with the left arrow key. Go to the toolbar and choose the Type tool with a suitable font – in this example we're using a font called Beware.

19 TEXT STROKE

Type your heading with a medium grey colour and then use the Transform palette to add 20 degree skew. Now copy and paste behind the text and add a six pixel white stroke to the text. This gives an effective white outline to the text which helps make it stand out.

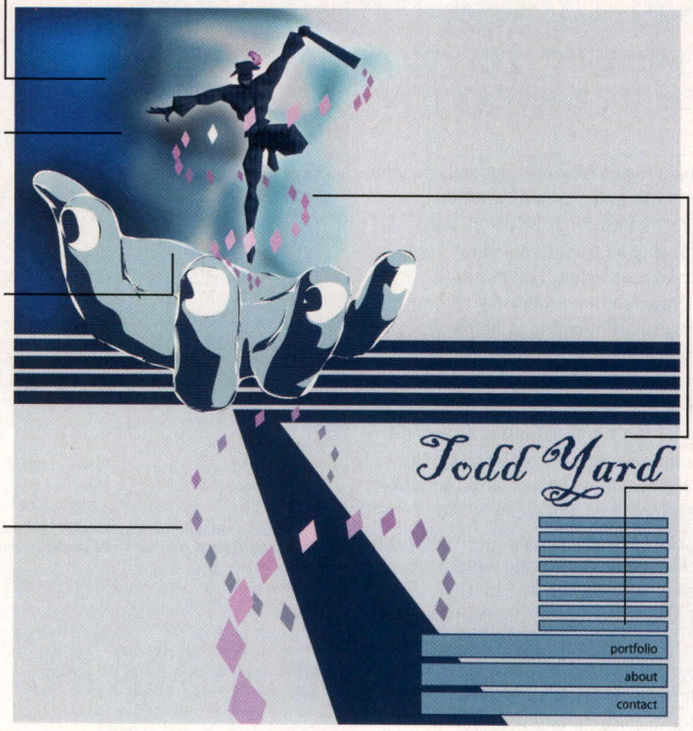
20 FINAL TOUCHES

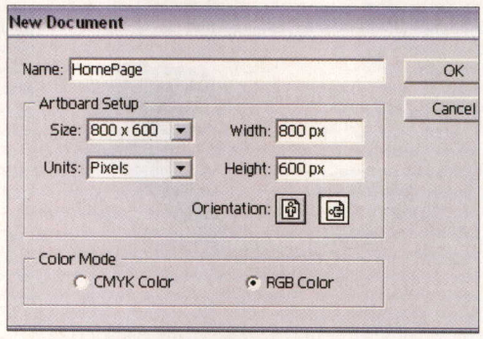
Copy and paste behind the text again and give the text a 10 pixel stroke with a dark grey colour. With this selected, go to the Effects menu and choose Stylize and Drop Shadow. The settings should be the same as last time, so click OK to finish the logo.

DESIGN AMAZING WEB PAGES IN ILLUSTRATOR

THE EXPERT: TODD YARD

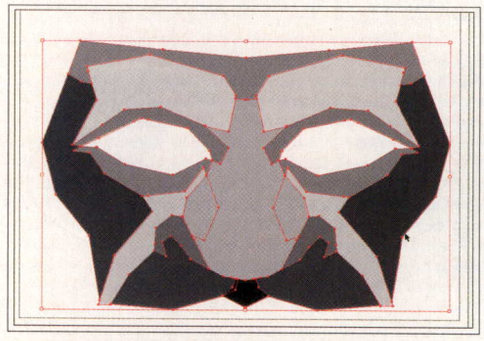
Originally from Pheonix, Arizona, Todd first started using Flash when he moved to New York City (via an acting course in London). He now works for Daedalus Media (www.daedalusmedia.com) in New York, and is also lead Flash programmer at ego 7 (www.ego7.com). Todd is also a regular contributor to the Friends of Ed series of books, and specialises in Flash, Illustrator and Photoshop.





1 SETTING UP THE FILE

Create a new Illustrator document with units in pixels and dimensions of 800x600. Our page will actually go outside these boundaries, but these dimensions will be a good place to start. Make sure your rulers are turned on (CTRL & R or View > Show Rulers).



2 DEFINING A MASK'S CONTOURS

The background of our image will consist of a blurred mask. To help get the lighting of the mask correct, draw a series of shapes to define the mask. Colour is unimportant, as long as you can clearly see the mask's contours and how it will catch the light.

3 LIGHTING THE MASK

Pick four separate colours and draw a highlight, shadow, darker shadow and neutral colour with the Pen tool, as if light was hitting it from the right. Keep the left side almost totally in shadow and the right only vaguely defined with the highlight colour. Delete the base mask when done.

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Create an imaginative and exciting Web page entirely within Illustrator

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
3-4 hours

ON THE DISC
Xxxx
Image used:
Xxxxxxxxxx/
Xxxxxxxxxx/
Xxxxxxxxxx

Tired of jumping from one app to the next when developing a site? Try using Illustrator

Illustrator is the industry standard when it comes to vector art creation, from logo and package design to print illustration. Although many use it in the Web design process, it often gets relegated to laying out a page or fleshing out the illustration (for perhaps Flash or Photoshop import) and its Web capabilities are ignored.

That's a shame, for Illustrator has much of the export functionality that Photoshop users have had since version 5.5. There's no reason to jump to other apps if Illustrator is your starting point – it has everything you need to create a fantastically sleek page exhibiting your own illustrative style.

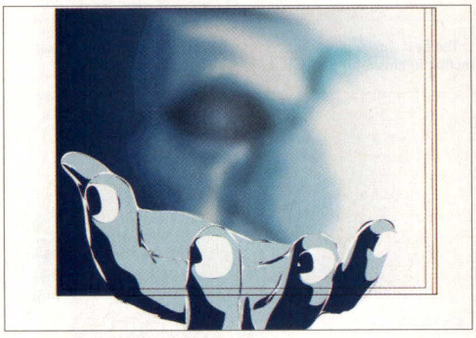
In this tutorial we'll step through the process of creating a home page entirely within Illustrator, from laying out and creating both vector and bitmap effects all the way through to exporting a sliced-up HTML page complete with image maps for our navigation. Our page will be the main port of entry for a designer's portfolio site, with its links set up to load additional pages of content. The intention of this page is to excite the imagination of visitors and get them interested in seeing more. ■

4 BLURRING AND CLIPPING THE MASK

Place all contour shapes on the same layer and group all but the highlight (drawn as a rectangle filling the negative space). Select Effects > Blur > Guassian Blur with a radius of 11. Draw a rectangle to cover the layer, then target the layer and select Object > Clipping Mask > Make to clip the mask.

5 BLENDING MODE FOR THE MASK

To enhance the effect, create a new layer below the mask and draw a rectangle filled with a linear gradient, going from dark to light. Target the mask's layer and change its blending mode in Transparency to Hard Light. This gives an eerie effect. We also added a radial gradient to the eye.



6 GIVING THE MASK A HAND

We used Poser to pose and export a vector hand to use in the design (hand.ai). Open the file, run Object > Path > Simplify, with a low curve precision to get smooth lines. Copy the hand into the Web page file and recolour it to match the mask. We used a screenshot of a desktop to sample colours.

7 ADDING A DANCING HARLEQUIN

After adding some horizontal bars beneath the mask, use the Pen tool to draw a dancing figure in the palm of the hand. Make it a solid silhouette in order to concentrate more on the dynamic nature of the stance and not the inner detail. We drew Harlequin, complete with his slapstick in hand.

8 DETAILING THE HARLEQUIN FIGURE

Add highlights and shadows to the figure using a black contour set to multiply, and a white contour set to screen. Now create a series of black and white diamond shapes and white horizontal lines to cover the figure. Set their blending mode to Screen or Multiply too, then clip them within the figure's shape.

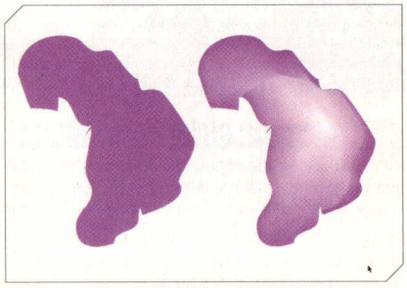
9 ENHANCEMENTS TO HARLEQUIN

To make the figure pop out, copy and paste (Ctrl & B) the figure's basic shape. Fill it with white and use Path, Offset Path to expand it, then Effect, Blur, Guassian Blur to create an outer glow. Draw a small oval, and use Warp tools to make it featherlike, converting the shape to a gradient mesh to colour.

TECHNIQUE

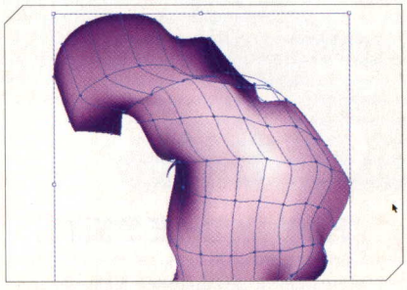
GRADIENT MESH

The gradient mesh in Illustrator is a great tool for creating objects with inner contours and smooth colour changes. Let's step through the creation of our Harlequin's feather to see what can be achieved.



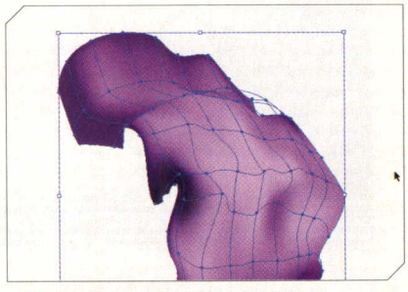
1 CONVERTING A SHAPE TO A MESH

You can create a mesh in a number of ways. We will take an existing shape filled with our feather's base colour and use Object > Create Gradient Mesh to get the job done. Select 8 rows by 8 columns with To Center selected for Appearance.



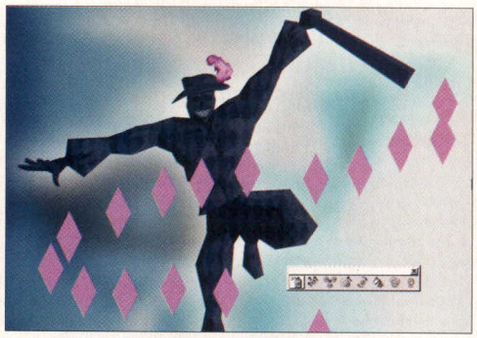
2 COLOURING A MESH USING HSB

With the Direct Selection tool, select the outer nodes of the mesh. In the Colour palette, change the colour space to HSB. This lets you keep the same hue but alter the brightness/saturation of the feather. Drag the brightness slider to the left to darken the edges of the feather.



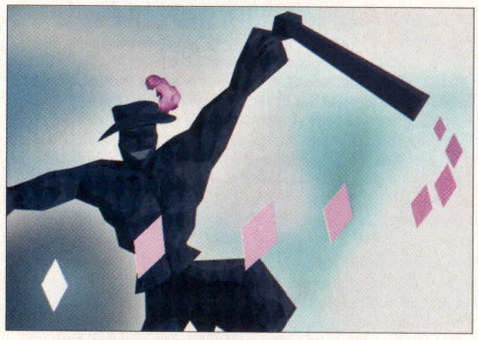
3 ALTERING THE MESH'S SHAPE

The mesh is just a collection of connected Bezier curves, which means you can use the Direct Selection tool and the Convert Anchor Point tool to alter the shape to better follow the desired contours. Do this to smooth out any odd sides of the mesh, then continue to use the Direct Selection tool to select and recolour points.



10 SWIRLING DIAMOND SYMBOLS

Create a simple purple diamond shape and drag it into the Symbols palette. With the New Symbol swatch selected, use the Symbol Sprayer tool to create a swirl of diamonds around the Harlequin figure. Double-click the tool in the toolbox to access its menus and set its diameter.



11 PLAYING WITH THE SYMBOLS

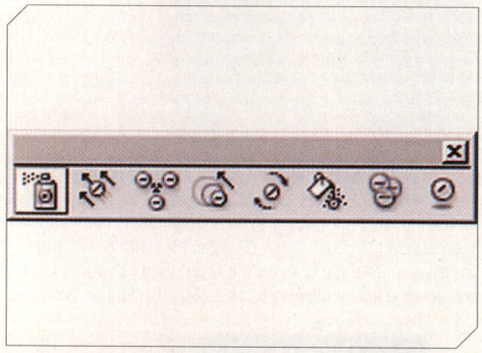
Use the Symbol Shifter to reposition the diamonds. The Symbol Sizer can be used to create a 3D feel by shrinking those on the far side of the swirl and enlarging those on the near. Use the Symbol Spinner to add randomness and movement to the diamonds, and the Symbol Stainer to lighten or darken them.

IN DETAIL: ILLUSTRATOR SYMBOLS

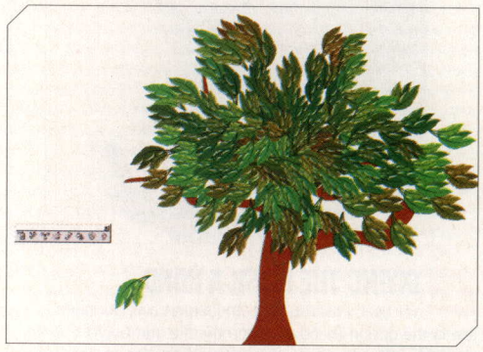
Power up your Illustrator creations by using time-saving symbols within the program

When we heard that symbols were to be incorporated in Illustrator, we did wonder whether there would be much call for them. Although useful in some instances such as map or diagram illustration, other uses weren't apparent until we got the symbols 'out of the box' and started playing with them. What we found was that symbols within Illustrator can be fantastically useful when it comes to introducing a sense of chaos to a group of similar elements—in other words, particle systems!

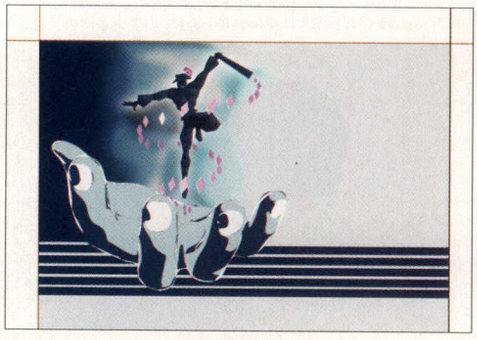
For instance, create a leaf or small group of leaves and drag them into the Symbols palette. By using the Symbol Sprayer to place them on the page, the Shifter and Scruncher to reposition them, the Spinner to rotate them, and the Stainer and Screener to alter colour and opacity, you can have a convincing tree in moments. In the same way, you can create an entire forest, a starry sky or even the crowds in a stadium. And since the initial symbol can be edited and replaced, the art always stays dynamic and malleable. ■



■ The best things often come in small packages, and the Symbols toolbar in Illustrator packs great features into its compact size

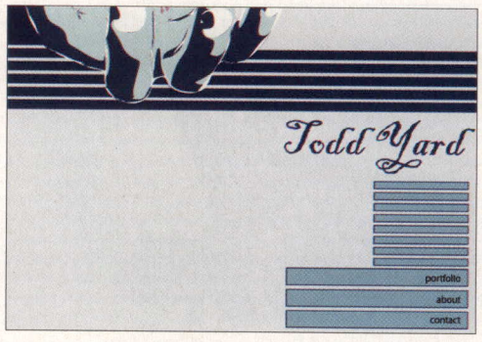


■ Get to know the Symbols well, and you can create effective images like this from scratch in next to no time



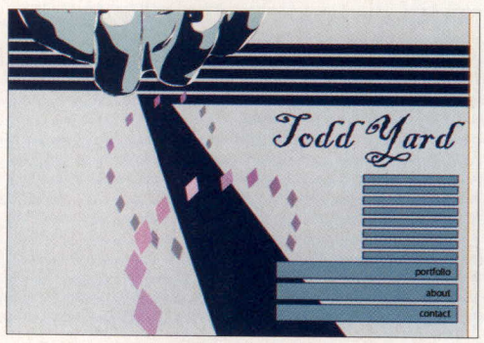
12 SIZING UP THE PAGE

Now with the majority of art complete, decide on a final size for the page and drag out four guides to box it in (we used 789x860 for our page, which fitted our layout). Scale your art to fit, then draw a rectangle for the page's background colour and place it at the bottom of the layer stack.



13 ADDING TITLE AND NAVIGATION

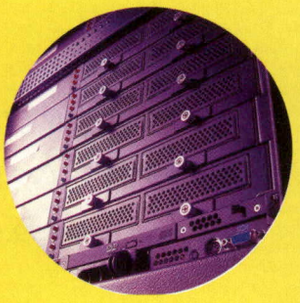
On the lower right of the page, draw a stack of horizontal boxes filled with a colour sampled from the mask at the top left. Place text in a readable font in the boxes for the site's section names: 'about', 'portfolio' and 'contact'. Pick an appropriate font for your name and place it above the boxes.

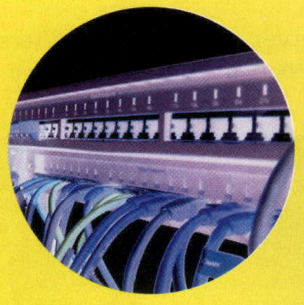


14 ADDING MORE DIAMOND SWIRLS

To tie the upper image to the lower, branch out one of the horizontal bands so it turns to the lower right. With the Symbol Sprayer tool, add two new swirls around the descending band. Then use the other symbol manipulation tools to create the 3D swirl feel as we did in step 12.

WEB TAPESTRY





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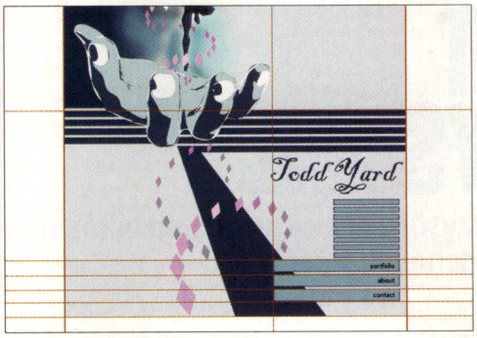
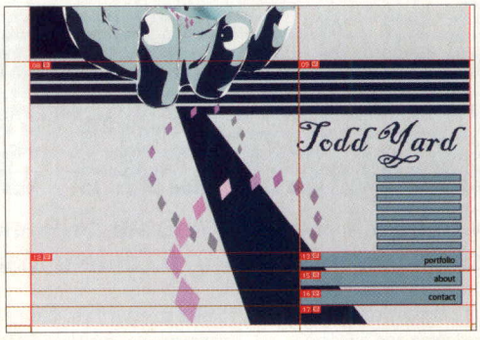


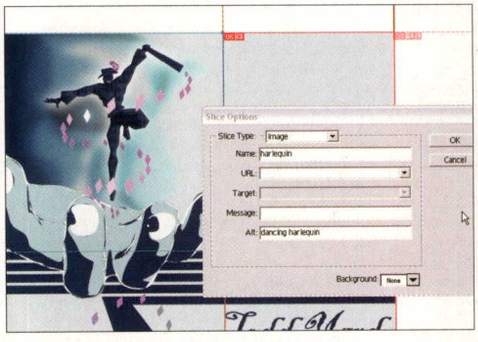
15 GUIDES FOR THE SLICES

It's time to prepare for slicing: we'll split the page into several regions. The upper left containing the bitmap will need to be sliced and exported as a JPEG, the navigation needs to be sliced to use JavaScript effects; the rest needs to be sliced to allow for this. Drag out guides to define these regions.



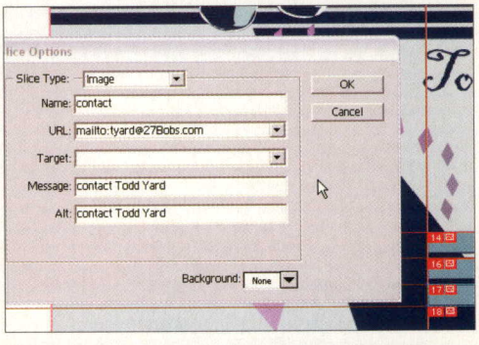
16 SLICING THE PAGE

With guides set, hit Object > Slice > Create from Guides for initial slices to be made. Some extra slices will be created, so use the Slice Selection to delete these. With a slice selected, you can use the regular Selection tool to resize it. (The blurred bitmap might cause extra slices that we'll delete from the HTML).



17 SETTING SLICE OPTIONS

Using the Slice Selection tool or the Layers palette, select each slice and use Object > Slice > Slice Options to set the name for each slice as it will be exported. Also, be sure to add an Alt tag to each for non-graphics browsers and screenreaders.

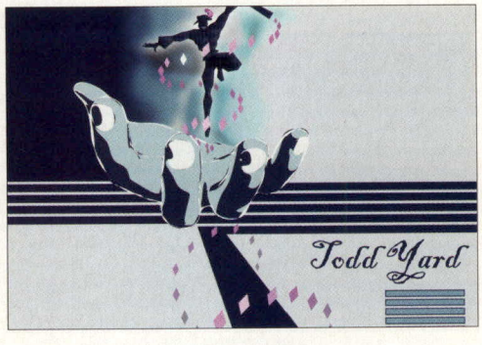


18 ADDING LINKS TO THE NAVIGATION

For the navigation slices, fill in the Message field in the Slide Options with what you want to appear in the status bar as the user rolls over the slice (eg 'go to about'). Pick an intended URL for the 'about' and 'portfolio' links and set the target as '_self'. For the contact slice, set the URL to your mail address.

19 EXPORTING THE PAGE

Select File > Save for Web. Choose Optimized in the dialog window and, using the Slice Select tool at the top left, select each slice and check its export settings. Choose JPEG for the upper left slice, as it contains a blurred bitmap best suited for jpg compression. The other slices can be exported as GIFs.



20 CLEANING UP THE TAGS

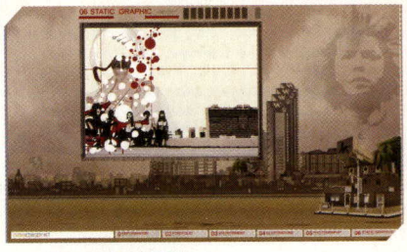
Open the HTML file in a text editor to clean up what Illustrator generates. We removed some extra slices, and added some stretching GIFs to our page to let it resize to fill the screen. Finally, we used CSS to set the body margin to 0, putting the graphic flush against the side of the browser.

BOOKMARKS

THE DESIGN CHAPEL

www.designchapel.com

No-one does sleek vector art like Robert Linström at The Design Chapel. His portfolio is breathtaking in both its detail and its simplicity, which he proves are not opposing ideas.



URBAN COWBOY

www.urbancowboy.net

Urban Cowboy is a fine example of fantastic vector art incorporated within a cool yet intuitive Flash navigation.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

As you can see, Illustrator provides a wealth of tools that a designer can incorporate into the Web design process. Although we have shown how Illustrator can be used from design to implementation, obviously incorporating other technologies can enhance your site and take it to the next level. The page we have set up can now be taken into Dreamweaver (or, heck, even hand-coded) and DHTML effects can be applied, from simple JavaScript rollovers to animation of layers. An alternative might be importing the page into Flash and animating and scripting there. In either case, incorporating a back-end solution can keep the site dynamic and easily updateable, ensuring your latest work is always showcased online.

TUTORIAL: DEVELOPER
BUILD A CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

THE EXPERT: RACHEL ANDREW

Rachel is a director of Web development company edgeofmyseat.com (**www.edgeofmyseat.com**), and is currently a member of the Web Standards Project (**www.webstandards.org**). With years of Webmaster experience, she has co-written a number of books for Glasshaus (**www.glasshaus.com**) on Web development, the most recent of which was *Dreamweaver MX Design Projects*.

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Install the tools required to develop our Content Management System

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
2-3 hours

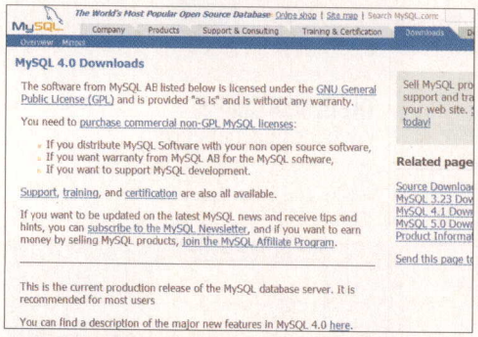
PART ONE

BUILD A CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Learn how to install your own Apache, PHP and MySQL development environment in your first steps towards creating a Content Management System

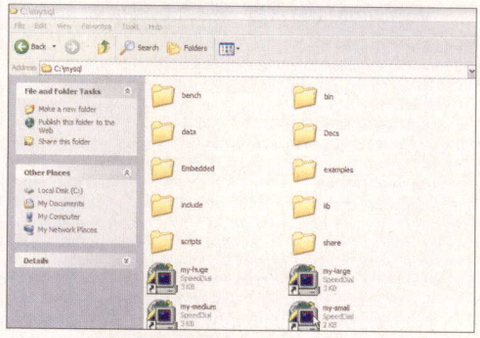
If you are already comfortable with designing and building static Web sites using HTML, but you're looking for new ways to improve your abilities, this tutorial is for you. Over the next few issues we'll be developing a Content Management System using PHP and MySQL. We'll be starting with the basics, so even if you have never touched a database or server-side scripting language, you should be able to follow this tutorial.

For this issue, we will be installing Apache, PHP and MySQL. To be able to develop PHP, you need a server to test your pages with. After installing the necessary tools, we'll begin by taking a look at MySQL, how to create tables and do simply queries at the command line and in a graphical environment. All the tools you need are free to download so let's get started! (This tutorial is written with PC users in mind, but there's no reason that Mac OS X coders, with their built-in Apache Server, can't follow the steps on the following pages). ■



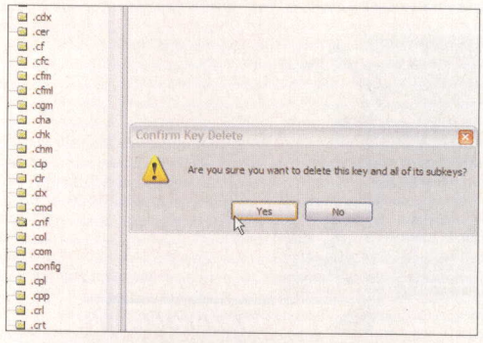
1 DOWNLOAD MYSQL

Start by installing the MySQL database, which you can download for free from **www.mysql.com/downloads/mysql-4.0.html**. We are going to use mySQL 4.0. Select the Windows download and download the zip file to your hard drive, this file is for all versions of Windows.



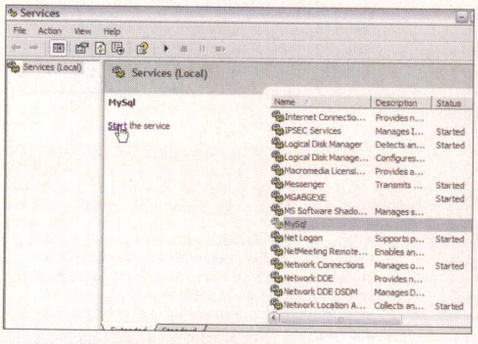
2 INSTALL MYSQL

Unzip the downloaded zip file, and run Setup.exe. Install MySQL with the default options to C:\mysql. Once MySQL has been successfully installed, use Windows Explorer to open your new MySQL directory. Copy the 'my-small.cnf' file to the root of your C: drive, and rename it to 'my.cnf'.



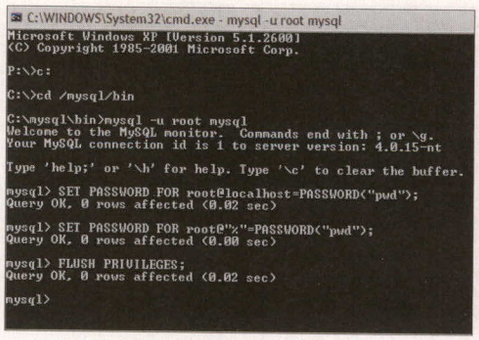
3 .CNF FILES IN WINDOWS NT/2000/XP

Windows thinks the 'my.cnf' file is associated with Windows SpeedDial. If you don't use SpeedDial, remove this association. Open the Command prompt and type regedt32.exe to open the Registry editor. Open HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Classes and delete the '.cnf' key. Restart Windows.



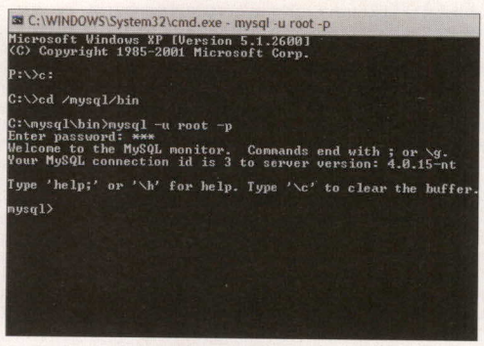
4 START THE SERVER

You should install mySQL as a service under NT/2000/XP. Open up the Command prompt and type: c:\mysql\bin\mysqld-nt -install. Now open Start > Control Panel > Administrative Tools > Services and locate MySQL. Click Start. You can now start and stop MySQL as you require.



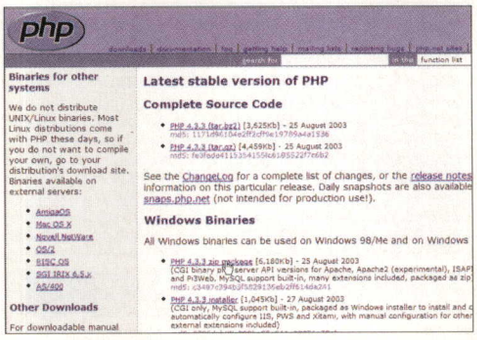
5 SETTING A ROOT PASSWORD

In the Command prompt, type cd /mysql/bin, then mysql -u root mysql. Type the following,:
SET PASSWORD FOR root@localhost=PASSWORD("pwd");
SET PASSWORD FOR root@"%"=PASSWORD("pwd");
FLUSH PRIVILEGES;. Replace 'pwd' with your own password.



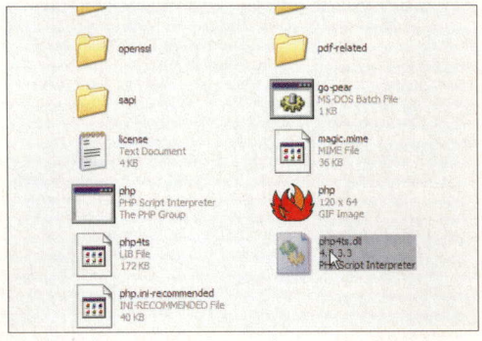
6 LOGGING INTO MYSQL

After setting your password, type quit, and you will leave MySQL. To log in with your new password, type mysql -u root -p and MySQL will ask you to enter your password. Type it at the prompt and hit Enter to log in. MySQL is now secured and ready for use.



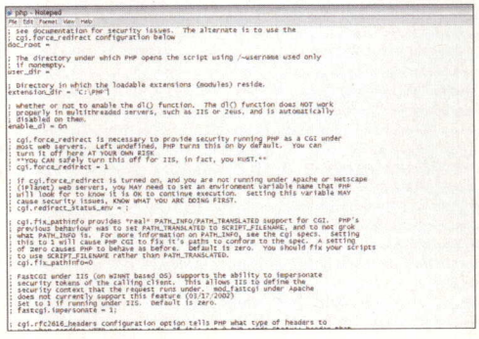
7 DOWNLOAD PHP

Our next step is to download and install PHP – you can get the latest version from **www.php.net/downloads.php**. Look under Windows Binaries and choose the package which contains both the CGI and server API rather than the installer. We've downloaded php-4.3.3-Win32.zip.



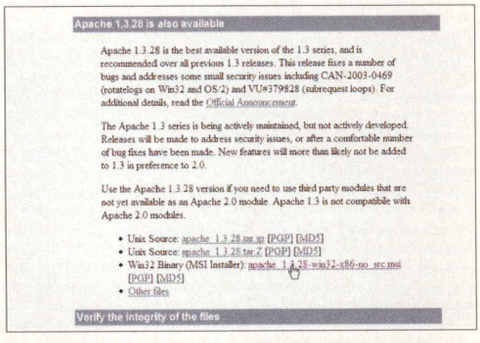
8 INSTALL PHP

Unzip the PHP zip and copy the contents to a location on your hard drive. Copy the file 'php4ts.dll' to your system32 folder (by default C:\WINDOWS\System32) and the file 'php.ini-dist' to your Windows folder (C:\WINDOWS). Rename 'php.ini-dist' to 'php.ini'.



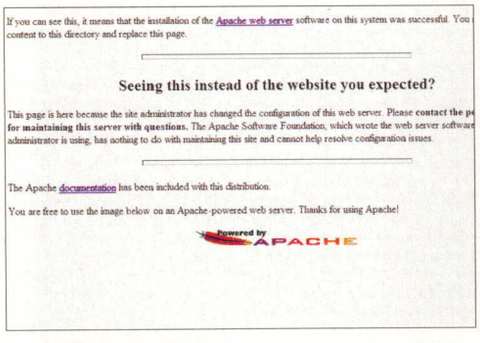
9 EDIT PHP.INI

Open 'php.ini' in a text editor then find the line 'extension_dir' and edit it to read 'extension_dir = "C:\PHP"' (the location in which PHP is installed)'. Continue down to the line 'session.save_path' and set it to 'session.save_path = /WINDOWS/TEMP (your Windows temp file)'. Save and close.



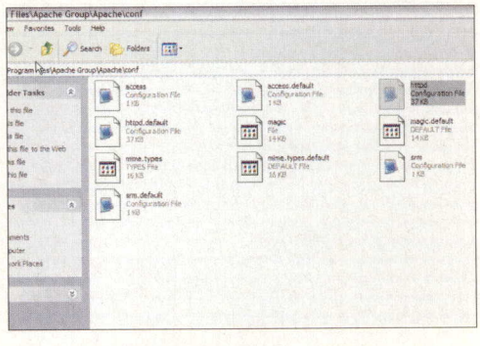
10 DOWNLOAD THE APACHE WEB SERVER

PHP works with a Web server. You can set it up to work with IIS (the Windows Web server), however most hosting environments use Apache. Download Apache from **httpd.apache.org/download.cgi**, and get the Win32 Binaries for the latest version of Apache 1.3.



11 INSTALL APACHE

Double-click the downloaded file to start the install. Select the button 'Run as a service for all users' when you are given the option. After installing, launch a Web browser and type 'http://localhost' – if Apache is installed and running correctly you should see a default page.



12 EXPLORING APACHE

Unless you told it to install elsewhere, the files for Apache will be found in C:\Program Files\Apache Group\Apache. Within that, htdocs is the default location for Web pages. The configuration files are in conf/. The most important is httpd.conf which is Apache's main configuration file.

GEEK SPEAK

CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
A Content Management System, or CMS, is a system that typically allows the editing of Web page content via a Web-based administration area. CMS range from the very simple – that just allow users to edit the content on pages using a form – to elaborate (and expensive) systems that provide functionality to manage and publish vast amounts of data by multiple content editors.

SERVER-SIDE SCRIPTING
Server-side scripting refers to scripting that is processed on the server. Server-side languages include PHP, ASP, ColdFusion, JSP and many others. The result of a server-side script can be sent to the browser as HTML – so a script that selects rows of information from the database might print an HTML table of that data – but the user will not be aware of the server-side script that did the work.

SQL
SQL (Structured Query Language) is the language of databases. It is used within the database itself and also from PHP pages when querying the database. The basics of SQL are more or less the same between databases, however there are some small differences. Despite this, once you have learned the basics of SQL you should have absolutely no problem working on a different database.

DATABASE
A database is an organised collection of information, stored in tables. The databases that we use on the Web are part of database management systems, which include software that enables querying of this information. Databases allow the easy linking of related information across multiple tables which makes it easier to search and manipulate the data.

TABLE
A database can contain multiple tables, these tables may relate to each other in some way or they may be standalone elements.

QUERY
A query is a statement written in SQL and sent to the database to request that it does something.

TECHNIQUE

VIRTUAL DIRECTORIES

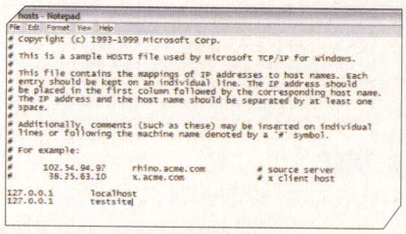
When developing complete web sites you will want to be able to create a new virtual directory for each site in order to keep the applications separate. Here's how...

```
You may use the command line option '-S' to verify your virtual host
configuration.

Use name-based virtual hosting.

NameVirtualHost *:80

VirtualHost example:
Almost any Apache directive may go into a VirtualHost container.
The first VirtualHost section is used for requests without a known
server name.

<VirtualHost *:80>
    ServerAdmin webmaster@dummy-host.example.com
    DocumentRoot /www/docs/dummy-host.example.com
    ServerName dummy-host.example.com
    ErrorLog logs/dummy-host.example.com-error_log
    CustomLog logs/dummy-host.example.com-access_log common
</VirtualHost>


<VirtualHost *:80>
        ServerAdmin your@emailaddress.com
        DocumentRoot /apache_sites/testsite/
        ServerName testsite
</VirtualHost>
```

1 CREATE A DIRECTORY

Create a directory for your site files, open up httpd.conf in Notepad and scroll to 'Virtual Hosts'. Uncomment the line #NameVirtualHost *:80 by removing the #. Add the following under this section:

```
<VirtualHost *:80>
        ServerAdmin your@emailaddress.com
        DocumentRoot /apache_sites/testsite/
        ServerName testsite
</VirtualHost>
```



2 EDIT YOUR HOSTS FILE

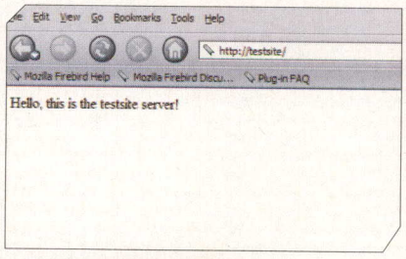
Locate your Windows hosts file. If you can't find it, do a search on your system for 'hosts'. Under the line that says:

```
127.0.0.1       localhost
```

add

```
127.0.0.1       testsite
```

(testsite being the name that is in ServerName in httpd.conf). Restart Apache.



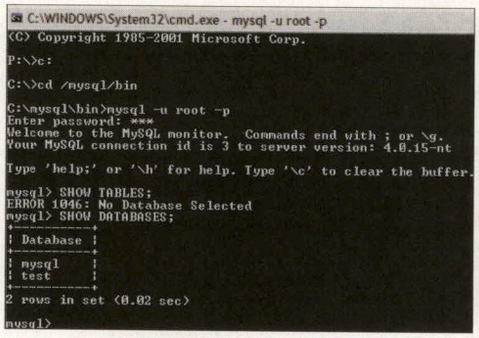
3 TEST THE DIRECTORY

You can now test the directory by saving an HTML page as index.html within the directory that you created. Then, with your web browser go to http://testsite. You should see the HTML page that you created. You can create as many virtual hosts for your sites as you wish.

```
LoadModule php4_module
c:/php/sapi/php4apache.dll
AddType application/x-httpd-php
.php .php3 .phtml
AddType application/x-httpd-php-
source .phps
```

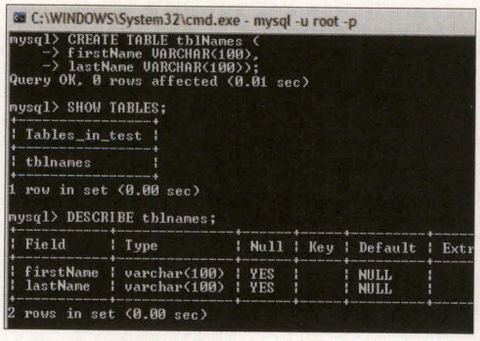
13 CONFIGURE PHP WITH APACHE

Open 'httpd.conf' in Notepad. At the bottom add the above code. Now scroll to the line that starts DirectoryIndex and edit it to read: DirectoryIndex index.html index.php Restart Apache with Start > Programs > Apache HTTP Server > Control Apache Server > Restart.



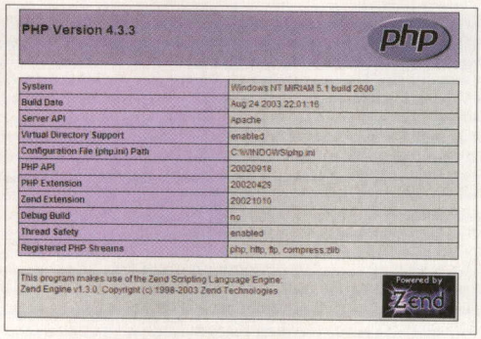
15 MYSQL BASICS

Now that you are set up let's have a look at MySQL in a little more depth to discover the basics of this database server. Open your command prompt and log into MySQL as before. At the prompt type 'SHOW DATABASES'. Two databases – 'mysq' and 'test' should be displayed.



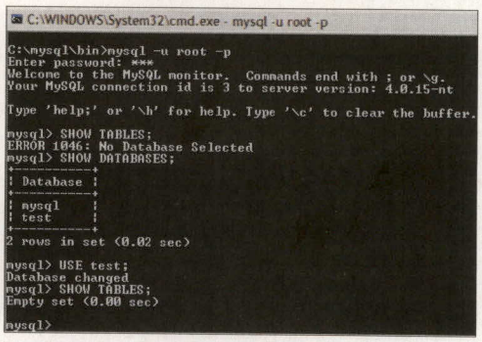
17 CREATE A TABLE

To create a table, type:CREATE TABLE tblNames (firstName VARCHAR(100), lastName VARCHAR(100));
If the table is created mySQL will say Query OK. Type SHOW TABLES; to it and DESCRIBE tblNames to see its details.



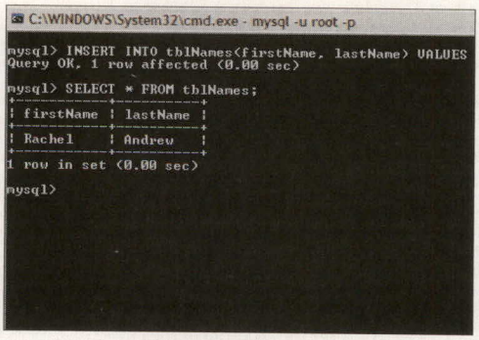
14 TEST YOUR PHP INSTALLATION

To test your PHP installation, open a document in a text or HTML editor. In this document, type <?=phpinfo()?> save the document into the Apache htdocs folder as 'info.php'. In your browser, type **localhost/info.php**. You should see a page with information about PHP.



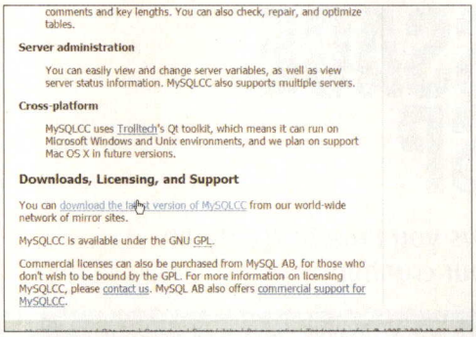
16 WORK WITH A DATABASE

The mysql database contains information about the server and users, so leave that one alone. However, we can use the test database. To do this, type 'USE test'; you are now working in the test database. Type 'SHOW TABLES' to see if a database contains tables.



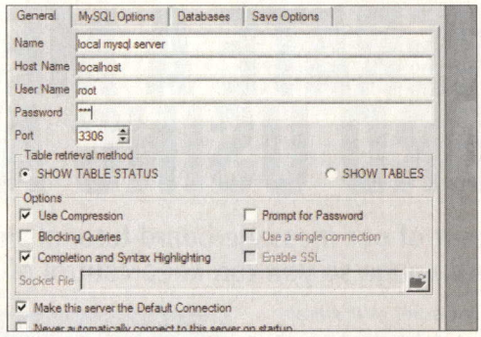
18 INSERT DATA INTO A TABLE

To insert a row, type: INSERT INTO tblNames(firstName,lastName) VALUES ('Rachel','Andrew'); You can view this row by selecting this data from the table using an SQL Query. For example:
SELECT * FROM tblNames;.



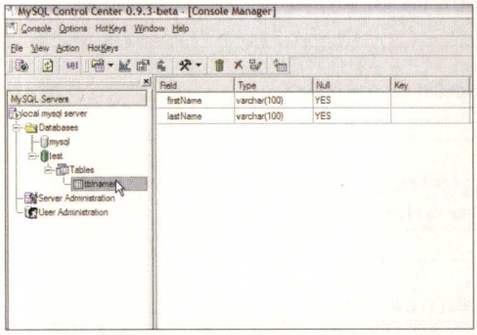
19 A MYSQL GUI

While many people work with MySQL from the command line as we have been doing, you may prefer a graphical environment. There are many GUIs for MySQL but we're going to use MySQL Control Center, available from **www.mysql.com/products/mysqlcc/index.html**.



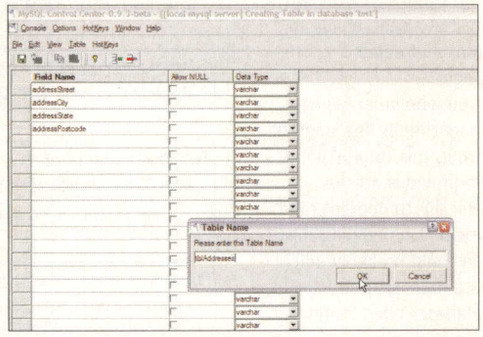
20 INSTALL MYSQL CONTROL CENTER

To install MySQLCC, unzip the files and run Setup.exe, then go through the installer. Launch the program from your start menu. It should launch with the Register Server dialog open. Complete the fields as shown above and then click Add.



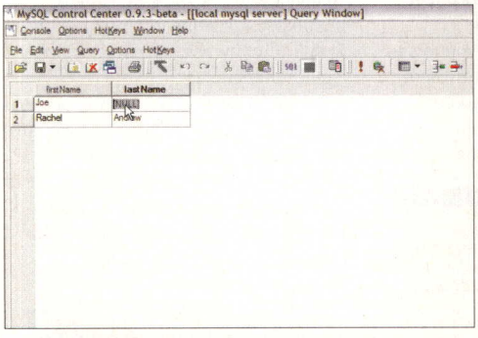
21 VIEW DATABASES AND TABLES

If your server has been added successfully it should appear in the left-hand pane of the Console Manager under MySQL Servers. Double-click it, and expand the folder 'Databases'. You should see the mysql and test databases. Double-click on Test and Expand Tables to see tblnames.



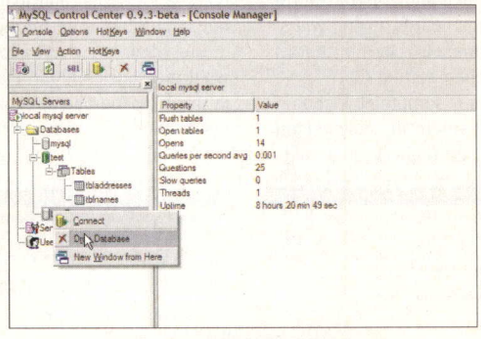
22 CREATE A NEW TABLE

To create a new table in MySQLCC, right-click on Tables (under the test database) and select New Table. You can then type in your field names and give the information about them – if you have worked with a database such as Access, this will look familiar to you.



23 VIEW AND INSERT TABLE DATA

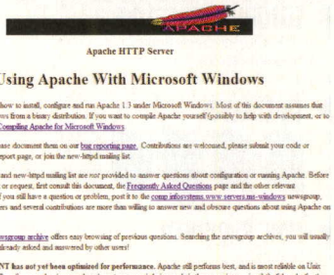
To view the rows in a table, double-click on that table in the tree view. To insert a row, with the data displayed, select Query > Insert Record. A new row will appear in the table with [NULL] in the fields, just replace this [NULL] with your data.



24 CREATE AND DELETE DATABASES

You can create new databases and perform most other administrative tasks from within the MySQL Control Center. To create a new database, right-click Databases and select New Database. To delete, right-click on the database and select Drop Database – 'Drop' means delete.

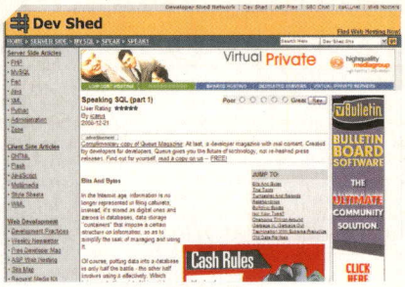
BOOKMARKS



USING APACHE WITH MICROSOFT WINDOWS

httpd.apache.org/docs/windows.html

If you ran into any problems while installing or running Apache, or just want to understand the process more fully, this page should give you the information you need.



DEVSHED - SPEAKING SQL

www.devshed.com/Server_Side/MySQL/Speak/Speak1/page1.html

We'll be doing more SQL as we progress through these tutorials but if you are interested in having a deeper look at SQL in MySQL, check out this tutorial.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

This tutorial has taken you through the steps needed to install all the necessary tools for an Apache/PHP/MySQL development environment. In the next issue we will begin to actually use PHP and MySQL as we begin to develop our Content Management System. If you can't wait to try out your new server, however, exploring some basic PHP will give you a good start with the language. You can also become more comfortable with MySQL by working with the database – either at the Command prompt or with the MySQL Control Center. Next issue we will begin by creating tables in MySQL to store our content and then creating pages with PHP that can access and display that content.

GENERATE A MESSAGE BOARD USING ASP

THE EXPERT: PHILIP BENNISON

Philip has been working in new media for nearly a decade, and has been writing coding tutorials for the past six years. Over his career, he's worked on everything from blue-chip corporate Web sites to small business eCommerce enterprises. When not coding, he says you can find him amusing himself by hitting people with swords and playing Scrabble.

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Build the admin section of an online forum

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
60 minutes

CODING TIP

WHAT IS SQL?

SQL is a string of text that allows us to extract, manipulate, and delete data from our database. In fact, it lets us do just about anything to the database we like (so long as we have permission to do so).

In it's simplest form, SQL is reasonably intuitive. For example:

SELECT data FROM table;

However, it can get much more complicated when you try to do more advanced things, such as selecting data from two separate tables simultaneously.

GENERATE A MESSAGE BOARD USING ASP

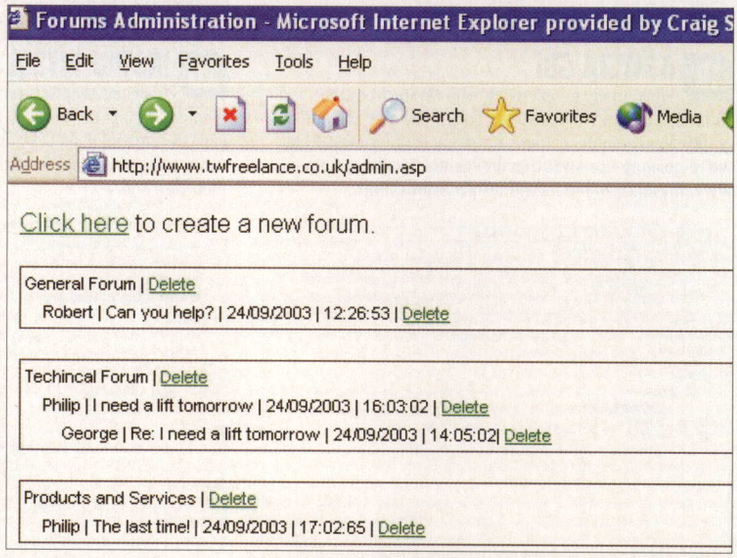
The final part of our message board tutorial shows you how to create an online admin page so you can keep control of your creation

In recent issues of *Practical Internet*, we've steadily built up a message board with ASP. This month, we round off the series. We've already shown you how to create the database, display the messages, and allow users to post their own messages, and this month we'll be dealing with the back-end pages that give you and the other administrators the ability to create new forums and delete unwanted messages.

For those of you who've only just picked up the magazine at this stage of our little endeavour, this tutorial is the last part of three previous articles.

If you're technically competent (and you probably wouldn't be reading this if you weren't) you could probably edit, delete, and create messages directly through your database. Why, therefore, bother building an admin page?

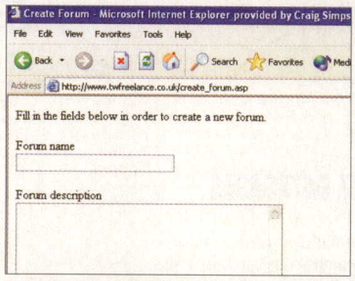
There are a number of reasons, not least the fact that you don't want to be the one burdened with sorting out the message boards all the time. Creating a user-friendly admin page means you can give other (trusted) people access to these pages, and allow them control over the message boards, giving you a lot more free time. Let's face it, there's nothing worse than getting that dreaded call to say something's gone wrong, and that you're the only person who can sort it out. Building an admin page takes this strain away from you, without removing any of your Webmaster power.



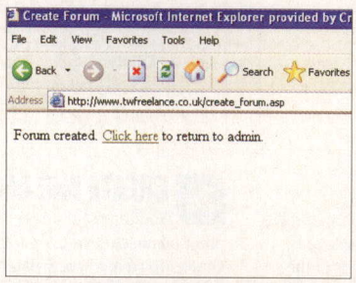
■ The forum page is a perfect example of functionality, with no graphics cluttering up the options

There's also the fact that admin pages make maintaining a message board a lot easier, and that's certainly not something to be sniffed at.

Our admin page will allow you to see what messages and forums are where in the message board, allow you to delete these messages or forum, and allow you to create new forums.



■ Your fellow administrators can create new forums with a couple of clicks of a mouse



■ Forum creation is easy with our admin page – and your fellow workers will thank you for it!

We're still using ASP and the database we created previously in order to do this, although we are using SQL to query the database when necessary. SQL has to be one of the handiest query languages around, and we would thoroughly recommend getting to grips with it. Go to **www.sqlcourse.com** for a quick primer.

The functionality in on admin pages is somewhat limited by the space we have to deal with this subject, and there are numerous other things you may want to try when you get the hang of things. The ability to edit the messages or to freeze threads would be valuable additions to the admin page.

One thing you should certainly bear in mind is that this section of your site should be password protected. Leaving it open to the public would be a very, very bad idea. The easiest way to do this is to set up HTTP authentication, but there are other methods, as described in some of our previous tutorials. ■

THE CODE

DESCRIPTION

Create a new text file named 'admin.asp'. This is going to be the main section of our admin pages, and it is from here that you'll be able to delete messages and create new forums.

1 The first task at hand is to list all the forums, all the threads, and all the messages, in such a way that it's easy to see which belongs where.

2 We have three loops taking place on this page, one looping through the forums, one looping through the threads in each forum, and one looping through all the messages in each thread. In this way, we list each and every message in the forum in a logical manner, along with a link allowing us to delete them.

3 Copy the code over, and move on to the next page. Create a new text file named 'create_forum.asp'. This is where the administrator will be able to create their own forum. It's a relatively simple page that takes forum input, checks the data, and then creates a new forum. Nothing we haven't seen before.

4 The last part of our script is delete page. Create a new text file named delete.asp. Our delete script is quick and brutal. The moment the administrator clicks delete, it goes through the database, deleting the message or forum, and any other messages connected to it if it's a form or a thread. You may want to consider coding a page that asks if the administrator is sure they want to delete the message/forum, just in case they clicked delete by accident.

admin.asp

```
<html><head><title>Forums Administration</title></head><body>
<a href='new_forum.asp'>Click here</a> to create a new forum.<%
Set Con = Server.CreateObject("ADODB.Connection")
Con.Open "messageboardDB"
Set rsF = Server.CreateObject("ADODB.RecordSet")
Set rsT = Server.CreateObject("ADODB.RecordSet")
Set rsM = Server.CreateObject("ADODB.RecordSet")
rsF.ActiveConnection = Con
rsT.ActiveConnection = Con
rsM.ActiveConnection = Con
rsF.Open "SELECT forum_name, forum_id FROM forums"
DO While NOT rsF.EOF
Response.Write("<table style='border:1pt solid #444444; width:100%; font-size:8pt;'>")
Response.Write("<tr><td>" & rsF("forum_name") & " | <a href='edit.asp?id=" & rsF("forum_id") &
"&type=forum'>Edit</a> | <a href='edit.asp?id=" & rsF("forum_id") &
"&type=forum'>Delete</a></td></tr>")
        rsT.Open "SELECT * FROM messages WHERE message_forum = " & rsF("forum_id")
        Do While NOT rsT.EOF
Response.Write("<tr><td>    " & rsT("message_from") & " | " &
rsT("message_subject") & " | " & rsT("message_date") & " | " & rsT("message_time") & " | <a
href='edit.asp?id=" & rsT("message_id") & "&type=message'>Edit</a> | <a href='edit.asp?id=" &
rsT("message_id") & "&type=message'>Delete</a></td></tr>")
                rsM.Open "SELECT * FROM messages WHERE message_thread = " & rsT("message_id")
                Do While NOT rsM.EOF
Response.Write("<tr><td>        " & rsM("message_from") &
" | " & rsM("message_subject") & " | " & rsM("message_date") & " | " & rsM("message_time") &
"</td><?tr>")
                        rsM.MoveNext
```

```
                Loop
                rsM.Close
                rsT.MoveNext
        Loop
        rsT.Close
        rsF.MoveNext
Loop
rsF.Close
%> </body></html>
```

create_forum.asp

```
<html><head><title>Create Forum</title></head><body> <%
If Request("create") Then
If Request("forum_name") <> "" AND Request("forum_description") <> "" AND
Request("forum_introduction") <> "" Then
        Set Con = Server.CreateObject("ADODB.Connection")
        Con.Open "messageboardDB"
        Con.Execute "INSERT INTO forums (forum_name, forum_description, forum_introduction) VALUES
('" & Replace(Request("forum_name"), "'", "''") & "', '" & Replace(Request("forum_description"), "'",
"''") & "', '" & Replace(Request("forum_introduction"), "'", "''") & "')"
                        Response.Write("Forum created. <a href='admin.asp'>Click here</a> to
return to admin.")
                Else
                        Response.Write("Sorry, but you have not filled in all the details.")
                End If
        Else
%> <form action='create_forum.asp' method='post'>
<p>Fill in the fields below in order to create a new forum.</p>
<p>Forum name<br><input type='text' size='30' name='forum_name'></p>
<p>Forum description<br><textarea rows=10 cols=40 name='forum_description'></textarea></p>
<p>Forum introduction<br><textarea rows=10 cols=40 name='forum_introduction'></textarea></p>
<p><input type='hidden' name='create' value='1'><input type='submit' value='Create Forum'></p>
</form> <%      End If %>
</body></html>
```

delete.asp

```
<html><head><title>Delete</title></head><body>
<% If Request("type") = "forum" Then
        Set Con = Server.CreateObject("ADODB.Connection")
        Con.Open "messageboardDB"
        Set rsT = Server.CreateObject("ADODB.RecordSet")
        rsT.ActiveConnection = Con
        Con.Execute "DELETE FROM forums WHERE forum_id = " & Request("id")
        rsT.Open "SELECT message_id FROM messages WHERE message_forum = " & Request("id")
        Do While NOT rsT.EOF
                Con.Execute "DELETE FROM messages WHERE message_thread = " & rsT("message_id")
                rsT.MoveNext
        Loop
        Con.Execute "DELETE FROM messages WHERE message_forum = " & Request("id")
        Response.Write("Forum deleted. <a href='admin.asp'>Click here</a> to return to admin.")
ElseIf Request("type") = "message" Then
        Set Con = Server.CreateObject("ADODB.Connection")
        Con.Open "messageboardDB"
        Con.Execute "DELETE FROM messages WHERE message_id = " & Request("id")
        Con.Execute "DELETE FROM messages WHERE message_thread = " & Request("id")
        Response.Write("Message deleted. <a href='admin.asp'>Click here</a> to return to admin.")
Else Response.Write("There has been an error. <a href='admin.asp'>Click here</a> to return to
admin.")
End If %>
</body></html>
```

THE EXPERT: PHILIP BENNISON
Philip has been working in new media for nearly a decade, and has been writing coding tutorials for the past six years. Over his career, he's worked on everything from blue-chip corporate Web sites to small business eCommerce enterprises. When not coding, you can find him amusing himself by hitting people with swords and playing Scrabble.

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Demonstrate how session cookies can be used in your application

SKILL LEVEL

TIME REQUIRED
30 minutes

CODING TIP

WHY USE PHP?
Most server-side scripting languages have some kind of session cookie function that makes it far easier to incorporate them into your application. In fact, session cookies are almost exactly the same as normal cookies, except that they're easier to create and manipulate.

The language of choice in this exercise is PHP. PHP is currently one of the premier online coding languages, and boasts good session cookie functionality. It is reasonably easy to get to grips with, and most Web hosts that offer server-side functionality will allow you to use it. If you want to run it from your own computer, you can download a copy of Apache HTTP Server from the Apache Web site (**www.apache.org**) for free.

If you fancy getting more information on PHP, want to download a free copy, or just want to find out more about how to code in PHP, go take a look at the official PHP Web site at **www.php.net**.

TRACKING USERS WITH SESSION COOKIES AND PHP

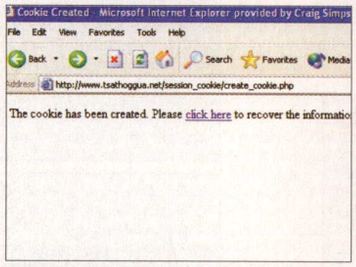
Whatever kind of online application you're planning on building, you're going to have to get to grips with session cookies. We show you how...

Creating an online application poses a number of problems for the Web designer. One of the first ones you're likely to encounter is the fact that Web servers have a seriously bad case of amnesia. Whenever a user moves from one page to the next, the server is likely to quickly forget anything and everything it learned about the user on the previous page.

This is because, on the whole, Web sites are non-persistent. This means that each time another page is requested by a user's Web browser, it is treated as a completely separate request to any of the ones that took place previously. But thankfully there are a number of ways around this particular dilemma.

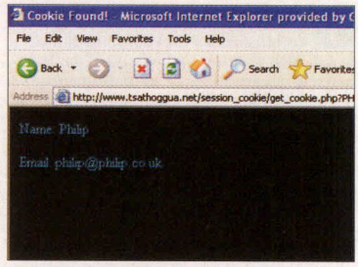
Some solutions

One way to pass information from one page to the next is by using forms. The user fills in a form, clicks Submit, and the information is sent to the Web server. This information can then be used on the next page. Although this method works perfectly well, it can end up being a bit on the cumbersome side.



The process of creating a cookie isn't the most visually stunning process in the world...

An alternative method of tackling this problem is by asking the user to log onto the Web site every time he or she accesses a page. You can then access an online database, and find the information you need in order to process the request. The only problem with this is that it's a remarkably unwieldy process and will invariably drain server resources like a horde of vampire bats.



The Session cookie allows you to follow your visitors as they move around your site

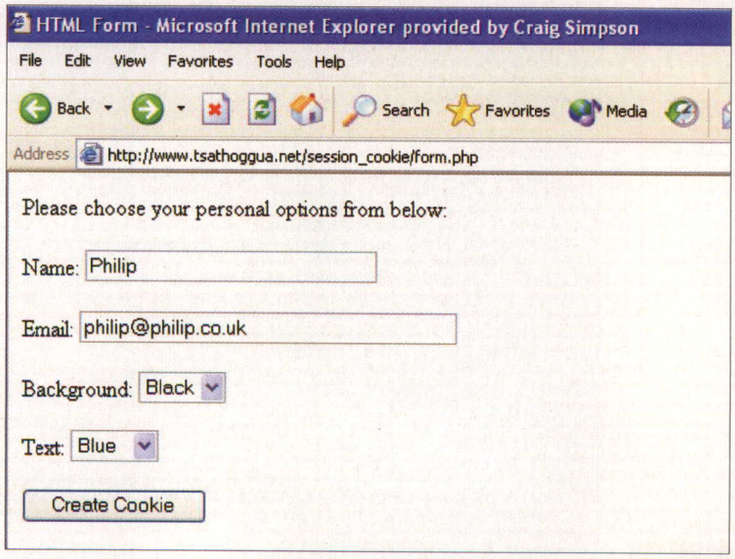
Thankfully there is one solution that doesn't require a huge amount of programming, and won't use up much in the way of system resources. This comes in the form of handy little nuggets of information you can store on the user's computer to access whenever you wish. We're talking about cookies.

Cook up a batch

Cookies can be created by the server at any point, and are passed to the client as part of the HTTP header (an invisible header to any request sent by the server or client for a web page or service). In return, this information is sent back to the server whenever the user's computer wants to get a Web page from it. Only cookies created by a server are actually sent back to the server in question, so there are minimal security risks.

Of course, if you're using cookies on your site, you'll need to be aware of the risks. It is possible for unscrupulous hackers to take over a session or read a session cookie, so you shouldn't use cookies to store important or private information. Equally, you should not use cookies as a form of user authentication, especially when protecting secure sections of your Web site.

But if you bear this in mind, you'll find cookies are remarkably useful, and will take the strain out of producing a good online application. ■



Once you've figured out how to use cookies, you can allow users to configure your site to their tastes

THE CODE

DESCRIPTION

This code demonstrates how session cookies can be used on your system in order to customise features and remember user's details.

1 Copy the first part of the code into a text file named 'form.php'. This is a simple HTML form that the user fills in, in order to specify their details and their preferences. We're using it here to get the information we need in order to fill our cookies.

Once you've created form.php and typed in the relevant information, create a new text file called 'create_cookie.php'. This is where we'll be creating the cookie itself.

It's important to note that the cookie needs to be created and read at the very beginning of the HTML document. This doesn't mean you can't do any server-side coding beforehand, but you have to deal with the cookies before you output anything to the Web page (such as the <head> or <body> tags).

2 The first function you use when dealing with session cookies is 'session_start()' which basically tells the server that we're going to be using cookies.

Once this has been done, you can write and access cookie information using the '$_SESSION' global variable.

3 Finished typing in that chunk of code? Now start on our third file, named 'get_cookie.php', which uses similar concepts to those employed in 'create_cookie.php'. Create the text file, and enter the code. Note we use 'session_start()' again at the beginning. Whether reading or writing, we need to use this function first. We then use the '$_SESSION' global variable to read in all the relevant information into the right parts of the document.

```
<html>
        <head>
                <title>HTML Form</title>
        </head>
        <body>
                <p>Please choose your personal options from below:</p>
                <form action='create_cookie.php' method='post'>
                        <p>Name: <input type='text' size='30'
name='fullname'></p>
                        <p>Email: <input type='text' size='40' name='email'></p>
                        <p>Background: <select name='background'>
                                <option value='#222222'>Black</option>
                                <option value='#dddddd'>White</option>
                        </select></p>
                        <p>Text: <select name='text'>
                                <option value='#ffffff'>White</option>
                                <option value='#000000'>Black</option>
                                <option value='#00ccff'>Blue</option>
                        </select></p>
                        <p><input type='submit' value='Create Cookie'></p>
                </form>
        </body>
</html>


<?
        If (!$_POST["fullname"] || !$_POST["email"]) {
                echo "<html><head><title>Error</title></head><body>
<b>You have not entered the required information</body></html>";
                exit(); }
```

```
        session_start();
        $_SESSION["fullname"] = $_POST["fullname"];
        $_SESSION["email"] = $_POST["email"];
        $_SESSION["background"] = $_POST["background"];
        $_SESSION["text"] = $_POST["text"];
```

```
?>
<html><head><title>Cookie Created</title></head>
<body>
<p>The cookie has been created. Please <a href='get_cookie.php'>click here</a> to
recover the information.</p>
</body>
</html>

<?
        session_start();
        if (!session_is_registered("fullname")) {
                echo "<html><head><title>Error</title></head><body>
<b>There is no cookie</body></html>";
                exit(); }
?>
<html><head><title>Cookie Found!</title></head>
<style>
body {color:<?=$_SESSION["text"]?>;background:<?=$_SESSION["backgroundnm"]?>;}
</style>
<body>
<p>Name: <?=$_SESSION["fullname"]?></p>
<p>Email: <?=$_SESSION["email"]?></p>
</body>
</html>
```

THE BEST IN WEB DESIGN

Gallery

GALLERY

SUBMISSIONS

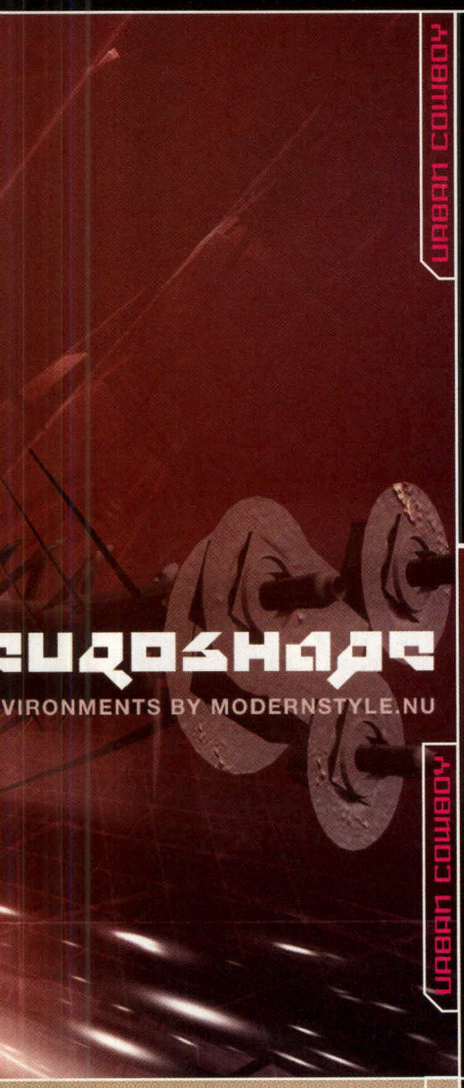
SEND YOUR SITES TO US

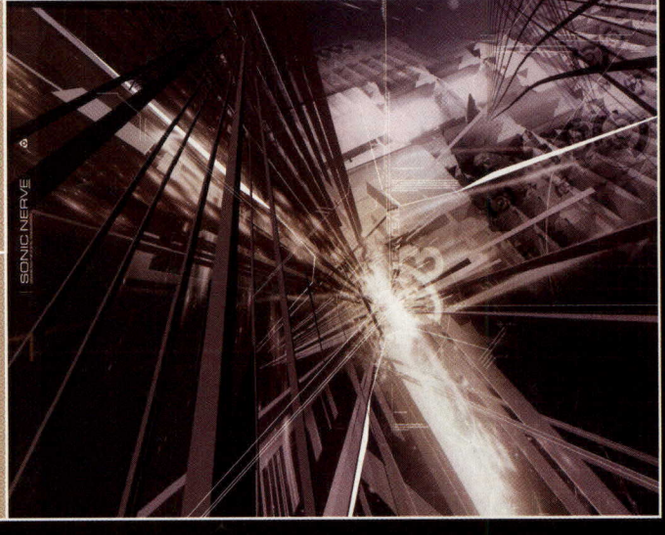
Have you got a site or a piece of artwork you've created that you'd like to see featured on these pages? If you're reading this thinking that you've done better, please drop us a line and we'll showcase your work to our like-minded readers. It doesn't matter if you're a Flash guru or a Photoshop master – as long as you've created something cool and visually appealing, then we'll cover your work in here. Who knows what it could lead to?

CONTACT:

Practical Internet Web Designer
Highbury- Paragon,
Paragon House,
St Peters Road,
Bournemouth, BH1 2JS

Email: webdesigner@paragon.co.uk





Name: Modernstyle
URL: www.modernstyle.nu
Designed by: Per Gustafson

Bleak, spiky and atmospheric imagery is the name of the game for Per Gustafson. The Swede is a regular contributor to respected graphics collections such as Digital Vision, and it's not hard to see why. The ModernStyle.nu project acts as a showcase for Per's many talents, with a myriad of highly stylised and achingly cool wallpapers available for download. Gustafson isn't merely an imageer, though – he's designed for clothing companies and is currently making a name for himself in the record industry through his innovative sleeve designs.

Name: Days in a Day
URL: www.1h05.com/diad
Designed by: 1 H05

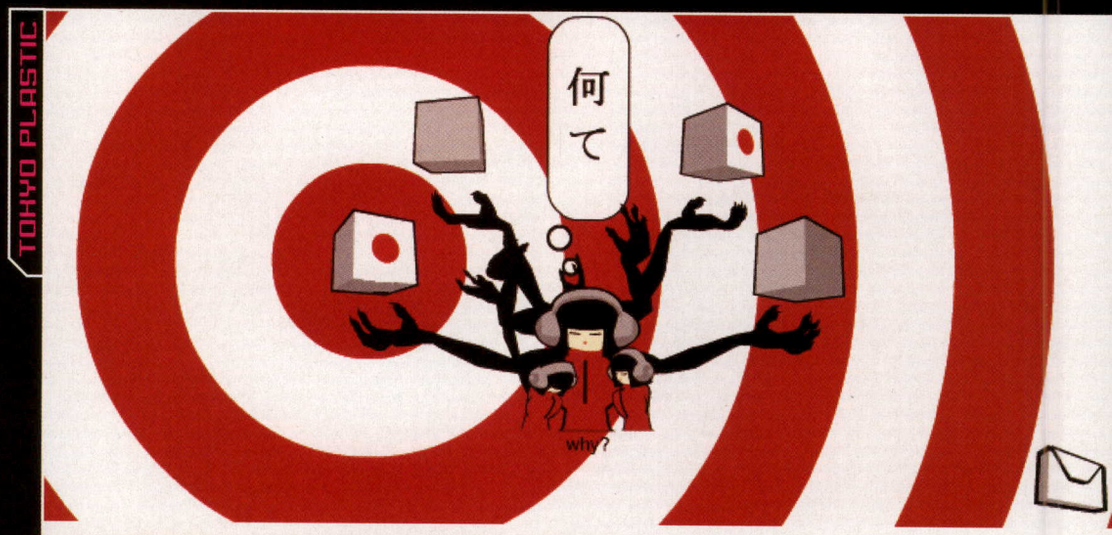
This conceptual site uses a bewildering array of Flash techniques to conjure up an absorbing experience. Complimented by scores of effective ambient music, the content follows a surreal journey through city life. Users are asked to follow a simian-faced Frenchman named 'Mr. Brown' as he moves across a map in real-time. Including beautifully rendered destinations, vibrant artwork and abstract imagery, the exhibition of artistic and technical design is exquisite. The work is also joined by similarly stunning projects such as the short film, *Inside Nothing*, and art magazine initiative *DQ*.

Name: Urban Cowboy
URL: www.urbancowboy.net
Designed by: Urban Cowboy

Patrick Boyer's cross-media design company has been a hugely influential trendsetter for the Web since its 2001 inception. Its own site is therefore a suitable testament to an eclectic mix of fashionable, iconic imagery and punk-like sensibilities. Cartoons of passively-faced cowboys and girls are joined by a cool soundtrack, and a particularly attractive selection of chic photos and sketches. Navigation is handled by clear-cut menus that not only provide details of the designers, but an impressive portfolio of commissions for Point Zero, Hithopper, and Popcoffee. It's all topped off with a neat downloads section so your desktop can grab a slice of the brand.

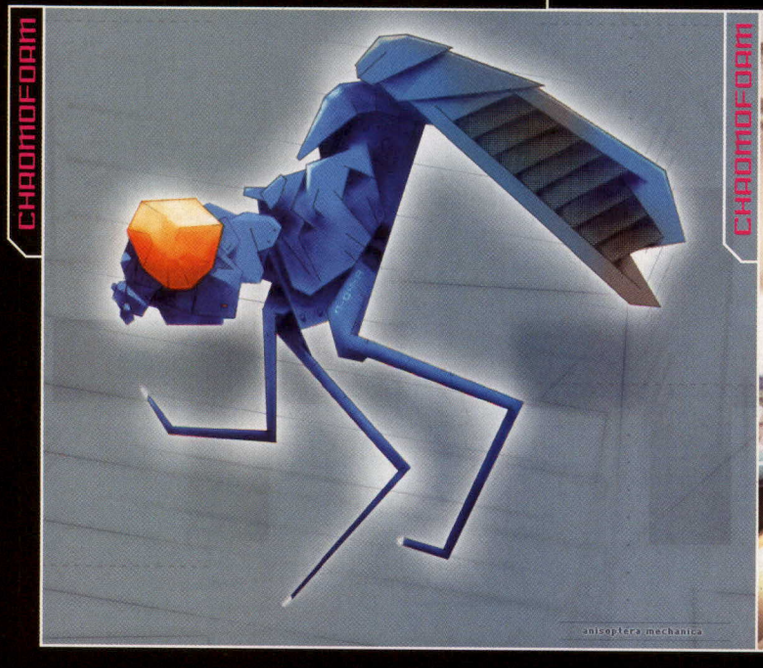
Name: Tokyo Plastic
URL: tokyoplastic.com
Designed by: Unknown collaborators

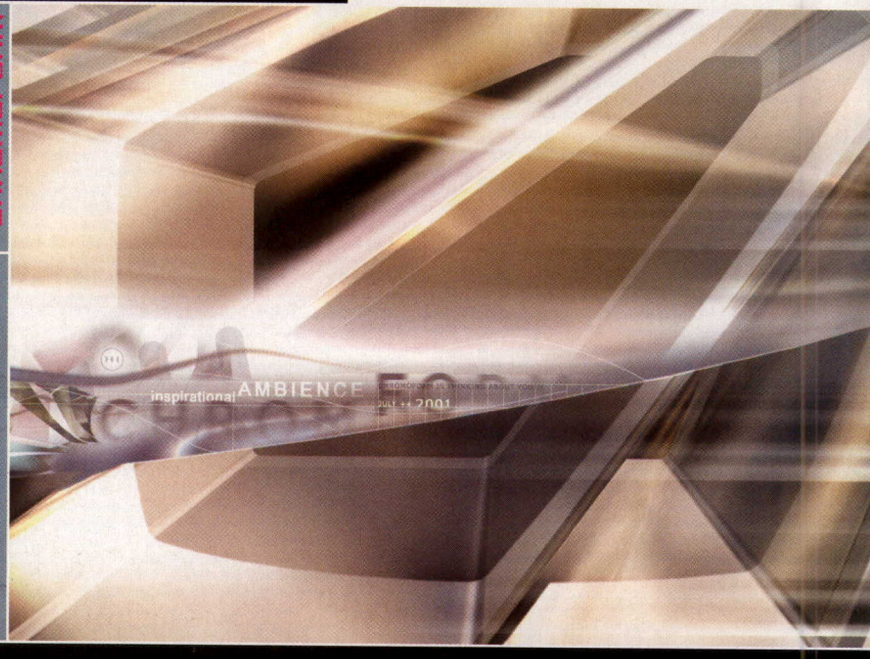
For some time now, Eastern artistic influences such as Japanese Manga and Anime have filtered worldwide. Tokyo Plastic signposts this appreciation with a series of short animations featuring iconic oriental characters. Augmented by brilliantly appropriate sound effects, the site's imagery of cutesy figures in Kimonos and sinister reptilian-like monsters is simplistic but delightful. Explained in their own words, the project aims to showcase techniques in "motion, sound and the 3D vector" while a linked gallery section presents conjunctional studies in sculpture. New versions are frequently introduced, and the creators will be appearing at this year's Cybersonica03 show in London.

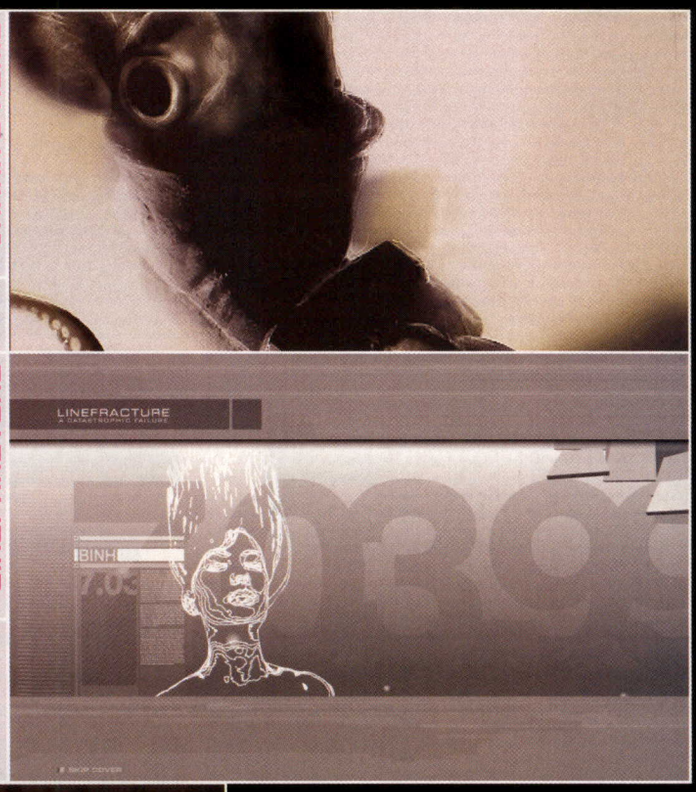


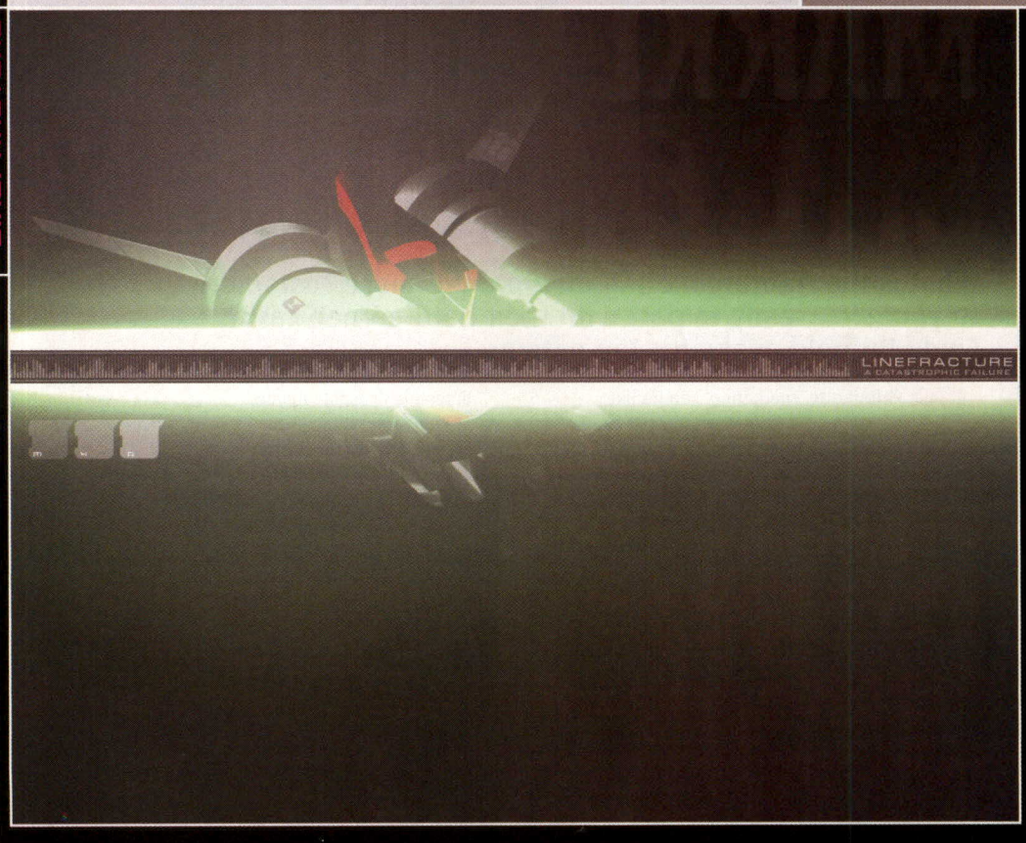
Name: Chromoform
URL: www.chromoform.com
Designed by: Pavel Baryshnikov

Tune into Chromoform for a masterclass in sleek Web design and a fine example of 'less is more'. Pavel's site might be sparsely laid out, but there are plenty of quality images here to make this a top class bookmark in anybody's browser. The St Petersburg designer even gives you sneak previews of unfinished work, allowing you to catch a glimpse at his creative process as you watch the image grow over time. Should you tire of the static elements, pop along to Flashkit, where you'll find a variety of contributions and designs from Baryshnikov.









Name: Linefracture
URL: www.linefracture.com
Designed by: Mako Miyasato
As well as a sleek line in incredibly cool Flash interface design, Mako Miyasato's site also displays his graphical mastery via a collection of downloadable desktop images. Although the site is minimal, it's easy to see Miyasato knows his way around an array of design packages. If you're feeling adventurous, why not download the PDF stickers on the site, and print out your own collection of wearable gummy badges?

Name: Varan's Home
URL: varan.redgraphic.com
Designed by: Varan
Primarily intended as a domain for artistic expression, Varan's site also demonstrates some ingenious methods for navigation. Links to a variety of sections are uncovered by guiding a tiny figure around a small vibrating room. Clickable nodes then appear on Bezier stalks for you to twist and situate conveniently upon the page. The content itself ranges from monotone abstract animations to artwork inspired by Dada exponents like Marcel Duchamp – all backed by unsettling audio. The 'Kinematic Cinematix' is particularly ingenius, an optical illusion featuring a person running where the frame rate can be raised or lowered.

ECOMMERCE

eCOMMERCE

Profitting on the Web
Making cash from your Web site is a common goal throughout the wired world. From multinational conglomerates through to one man band craft-makers, the ideal is the same: converting visitors into buyers.

The eCommerce section in *Practical Internet Web Designer* is designed specifically for people aiming to turn clicks into pounds (or dollars, or yen). This means that every month, we provide essential information for the decision-makers who shape their businesses' future.

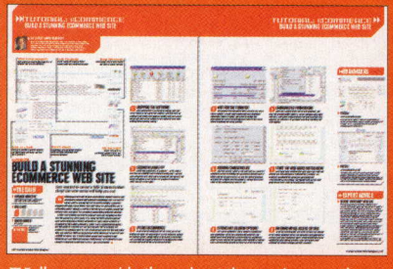
eBusiness is much more than selling your wares online, though, which is why we also strive to include tips and tricks for anyone who is keen to get their business or design portfolio online.

IN THIS ISSUE'S eCOMMERCE SECTION

Market your site effectively 96
Guaranteed ways to attract punters to your site, and to get them to part with cash when they get there

Build a killer Web site.....100
Create a fully functional business Web site with the first tutorial in our ten-part series

Web hosting guide.....106
Pick yourself the perfect Web hosting deal with our comprehensive listings section



Follow our guide throughout the coming months as we show you how to build a major eCommerce site

CONTACT US:

Do you have a topic you'd like to see covered in eCommerce?
Get in touch at:

Practical Internet Web Designer
Highbury - Paragon,
Paragon House,
St Peter' s Road,
Bournemouth, BH1 2JS

Email: webdesigner@paragon.co.uk

Retail sites such as Medusastore.co.uk are excellent examples of how a marketing campaign can boost sales

MARKET YOUR SITE EFFECTIVELY

What is the right marketing mix to drive those customers to your site, ready to part with their hard-earned cash? Cindy Duffield evaluates the options

Refering to 'marketing' can be like mentioning a dirty word. It costs money, and in the infancy of a business can appear unnecessary, with little measurable return on investment. But markets are competitive and regardless of how mind-blowingly fantastic your products or service, as soon as you go online, you are competing for headroom on an international stage.

Increasing visitor traffic should multiply sales, and with a modicum of business sense thrown in, the net result should be increased profits. But reaching your target customer base doesn't have to cost a fortune. Ingenuity and effort also count for a lot. How much you spend is largely dependent on the budgets you have available. But whether it's a little or a lot, a better way of apportioning the money is to prioritise the activity based on what is likely to deliver the best results in the timescale available to you.

Wandering through the marketing maze and the myriad of routes that just may reach your customer base can be a formidable task. The choices are considerable: capitalising on the search engine and directory infrastructure; developing email; segmented customer lists; link partnerships; newsgroups and forums; viral marketing and banner advertising... and they're just the online options. There are also the more traditional offline alternatives to be added to the mix.

Before going anywhere near your wallet, though, identify your market. Know your customers and what turns them on. What kind of Web content are they going to be interested in? What type of marketing antics appeal to them? How have other organisations in a similar field to you fared with their chosen tactics? How do your potential customers like to be

CASE STUDY

EGOVISION

EGOVISION'S STRATEGY TO INCREASE SALES ON THE HONG KONG LEGENDS SITE

■ John Lyons of Egovision, helped prove the power of marketing

NEED: Medusa Communications asked online strategy, design and development agency, Egovision, to develop a strategy to increase awareness and sales for its **www.hongkonglegends.co.uk** site, using the 30th anniversary of Bruce Lee's death as the catalyst.

STRATEGY: Egovision developed a two-part campaign centring on providing enthusiasts with new information and competitions to build the customer list. The first was a simple prize draw, offering entrants the chance to win one of 10 exclusive commemorative Bruce Lee DVD box sets, with their chances of winning escalating if they referred additional friends to the two week-long competition.

The second competition, which ran for a total of six weeks, required entrants to watch the eight best fight scenes and rank them in order. The 20 winning entries were those that most closely matched the opinions of the Medusa judging panel, the reward for which was a Bruce Lee goodie bag containing exclusive merchandise.

ESSENTIALS: The campaign required the development of a Bruce Lee microsite and a viral campaign targeting action movie, martial art and die-hard Bruce Lee fans. The site and competitions were pushed via an email campaign for three months, using the Hong Kong Legends mailing list, leased lists of action movie fans and gamers, and integrating online PR via forums, message boards, newsgroups and competition sites. Offline advertising was also placed in lifestyle and culture magazines.

RESULTS: During the first month of the promotion, traffic to Hong Kong Legends increased by 50 percent, with 4,500 competition entries received in the first week. The Web site income was increased by 38 percent, with 20 percent more orders being placed, and the average order value rising by 16 percent. Aside from campaign launch spikes, the site has shown an underlying trend of 20 percent more traffic than before the Bruce Lee campaign was launched.

■ The Hong Kong Legends arm of Medusa Communications turned to a specialist online strategist to increase sales

communicated with? What makes them responsive?

Work out what is interesting about you. Do you offer a unique proposition? Do you pride yourself on responsiveness? Are you cheaper? Whatever it is, clarify it in your mind and only then seek the counsel of experts – your Web site designer and a search engine optimisation (SEO) company. Your site and its high-ranking accessibility represent the crucial foundation on which the rest of your marketing depends.

Teddie Cowell, Technical Director at search engine marketing agency, Neutralize, explains: "SEOs look at how the site can be built to maximise performance in search engines. As this is the main way in which new business will come in, it is equally as important as the visual design." Cowell recommends that the SEO works alongside developers to plan how the site should be structured, the necessary inbound links and what key phrases should be focused on to ensure it will be properly indexed by search engine spiders to achieve high rankings.

Angela Jones, Director at technology-focused marketing agency, Bluebird Associates, emphasises the importance of optimisation, citing analyst company Forrester Research, which polled 8,600 Internet-enabled households. "The findings showed that search engine optimisation is 50 percent more effective than direct mail or Web site links, and 700 percent more effective than banner ads!" The message is clear from the outset then – search engine optimisation should sit top of the marketing priority list.

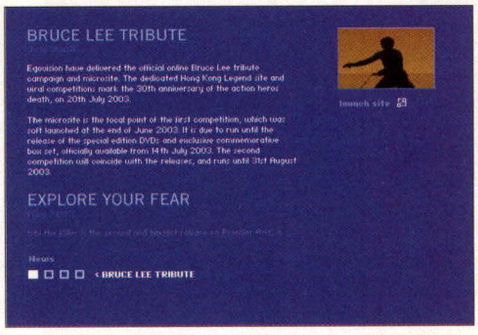
To underscore the point, bear in mind that being ranked in the top ten is equivalent to a 60 percent click-through rate, tailing off to only three or four percent if you're beyond the twenty-first ranking. So what about search engine and directory-paid inclusion/pay-as-you-click opportunities? A comparatively inexpensive form of advertising, popular paid inclusion services are available from AltaVista, LookSmart and Yahoo! as well as Overture and Google, but they are no replacement for good optimisation and have the downside of always being viewed as sponsored advertising.

An alternative might be affiliate marketing. Working with affiliate Web sites means that you pay commission when visitors are clicked through from your associate to your own Web site. Choosing affiliates in a related field should mean that their visitors are relevant to you, but the costs could mount up. Another option worth consideration might be to establish a consortium of other like-minded and complementary sites. The links between them should deliver more traffic to your site, achieve higher rankings in the search engines and ultimately increase sales – all without incurring additional costs. Offering some guidance, Cowell adds, "Partnering really depends on what you have to offer in the first place and how beneficial it will be to both parties. The trick is to find partners that match your brand values and have complementary offerings reaching the right audience."

Search engine optimisation, Web site content and affiliate marketing all come under the heading of being in the right place at the right time, of having good directions to your store and of the door being open to welcome visitors. But what of the more assertive stuff? Of proactively hammering home the right message to the right audience?

"EMAIL IS PERFECT FOR DELIVERING NEWS, BUT BE CAREFUL – IT ONLY HAS TO BE VIEWED AS JUNK ONCE TO BE IGNORED"

■ Tim Gibbon, Account Director for Elemental PR, sees inventive marketing as a good thing, but warns against faddy stunts



■ Businesses looking for a marketing angle would do well to check out a specialist online strategy agency, such as Egovision

Far and wide

Email offers the ability to communicate with hundreds of targeted people, anywhere, at the cost of a phone call. Lists can be leased and honed as profiles on your customers, and their preferred means of communication are logged. Email is the perfect automated and instant means of delivering hot, relevant news, but be careful – it only has to be viewed as junk mail once to be ignored forever.

■ Search engines can be your best friend, says Teddie Cowell

John Lyons, Interactive Director of online strategy, design and development agency, Egovision, believes in the power of word of mouth, saying, "I'm a big fan of 'friend-get-a-friend' promotions, whereby people are incentivised to introduce others. Word spreads and

BOOKMARKS

LAKEHOST.COM WEB SITE DESIGNER

www.lakehost.com/marketing/htm

A site that looks at the big picture rather than the actual tactics. It takes you through the primary points worthy of your time, from planning through the considerations for your Web site design and content to your expected ongoing involvement and necessary customer responsiveness. A good starting point.

MEDIACO: ONLINE MARKETING CONSULTANCY

www.search-engine-specialists.com

The Web site for MediaCo, an organisation devoted to online marketing and brand development. Its choice of domain name is an interesting one, highlighting that the importance of choosing a name which illustrates what you do optimises typical keyword searches. On site, MediaCo provides tips on search engines and online marketing – quick to rattle through and easy to digest.

THE SCOTTISH ENTERPRISE

www.scottish-enterprise.com

Although developed to help Scottish businesses succeed, the site has a large section devoted to online marketing that provides valuable advice for everyone. While its objective is to persuade you to attend one of its seminars, there are fact sheets on all the primary online marketing tools, explaining clearly and concisely the pros and cons of each as well as their likely application. Practical no-nonsense advice is coupled with an idea of the likely costs you'll have to bear.

■ Keep on top of how your marketing tactics are performing with monitoring services such as WebtraffIQ

there's a good pick-up rate."

The advantages of spreading the word can then be capitalised on in the format of competitions and surveys, regular newsletters, newsgroups and forums, all of which help sustain your brand in the minds of those who might buy.

And don't believe for a moment that as an online organisation, offline marketing should be ignored. Print advertising in media could well be the means of uplifting awareness of a new site, driving initial traffic to you, before a viral marketing campaign is instigated. Take for instance the introduction of a trendy new gadget that you know will be a 'must have' for the boys. Advertising in male lifestyle magazines, PR coverage explaining its appeal in female lifestyle magazines or a combination of the two will drive visitors to your site. Collection of their email addresses provides the subsequent opportunity for future targeted promotions or incentivised viral campaigns.

And what about stunts? They can attract considerable publicity. Just look at the front pages of every national newspaper when David Blaine elected to undertake the completely pointless activity of being suspended in a glass box for over 40 days, with little more that nappies and lip balm. If any publicity really was good publicity, that would be great, but stunts can turn round and bite you in the back. Tim Gibbon, Account Director for Elemental PR warns: "If the stunt goes wrong and you haven't accommodated for every eventuality, it could be a waste of budget. Even worse, you could be remembered for all the wrong reasons, damaging your business irreparably."

At the end of the day, marketing isn't an exact science. For each different situation, the pros and cons of the available tactics and their associated costs need to be balanced against the ultimate returns and the budgets to be had.

"WHATEVER TACTICS SEEM RIGHT FOR YOU, THE GOLDEN RULE IS TO BE WILLING TO ADAPT IF THEY'RE NOT DELIVERING"

Whatever mix of online and offline marketing tactics seem right for you, the golden rule must be to continually measure their success and be willing to change, adapt and tweak if they're not delivering. Gibbon emphasises: "For some of the emerging technology, marketing and PR mediums, there has to be an element of trial and error as they begin to communicate and interact with target audiences. Campaigns should be tracked, measured and analysed." Gibbon advocates the use of monitoring services such as WebtraffIQ to assess the success of marketing tactics used, adding: "Campaigns will inevitably need to be tweaked or changed, to ensure that they maximise their effectiveness and reach their full potential." ■

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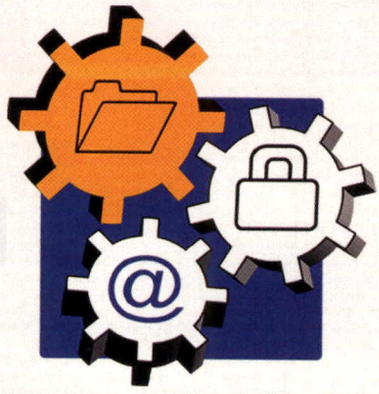
Real People Real Service

Web Hosting



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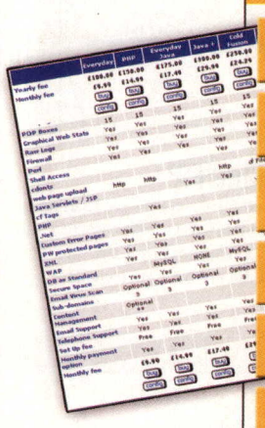

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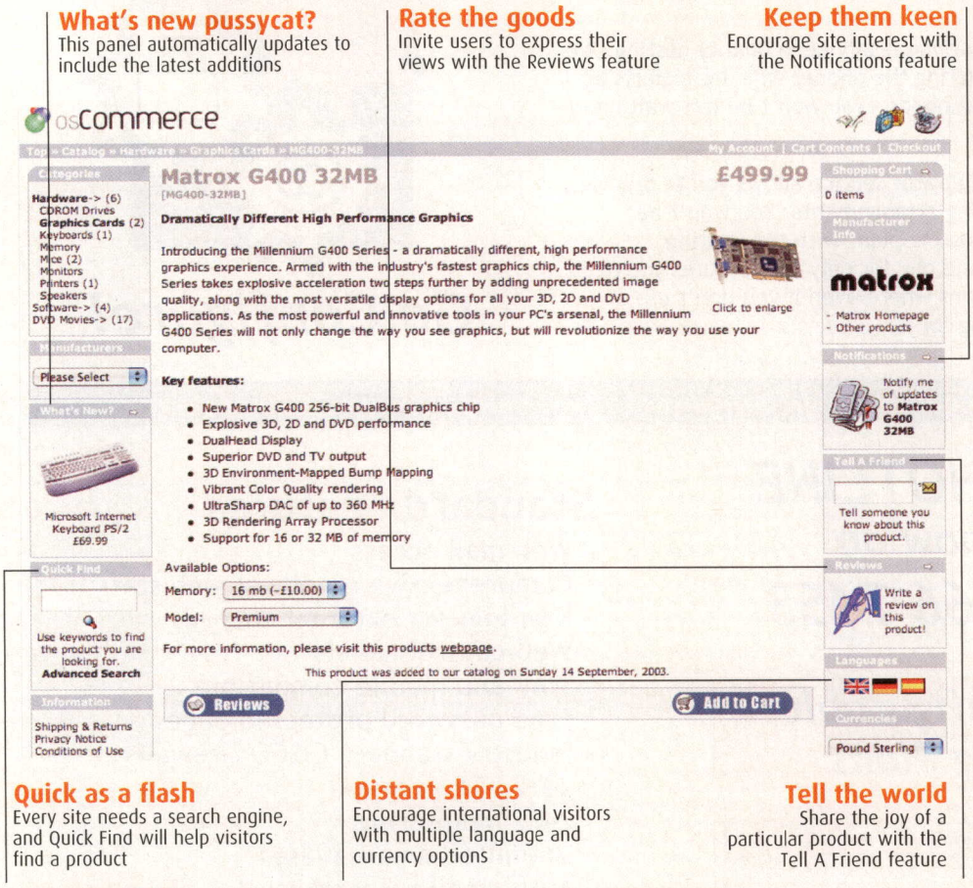
TUTORIAL: eCOMMERCE
BUILD A STUNNING ECOMMERCE WEB SITE

THE EXPERT: JAMES SEABRIGHT

James is a freelance Web designer and writer who specialises in hand-coding. He is a former Technical Editor of *Practical Internet*, and has been writing for the magazine since 1997. We picked James to write the eCommerce tutorial because, spanning ten issues, it will call upon many aspects of Web design – with his experience and multitude of skills, James was the perfect choice.



PART ONE

BUILD A STUNNING ECOMMERCE WEB SITE

THE BRIEF

TUTORIAL OBJECTIVE
Install the osCommerce software on your Web server and configure it

SKILL LEVEL

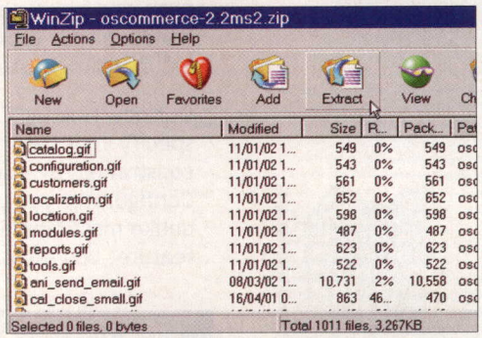
TIME REQUIRED
90 minutes

ON THE DISC
eCommerce/ Software: osCommerce

Ever wanted to create a fully featured online shop? Our new series will help you out

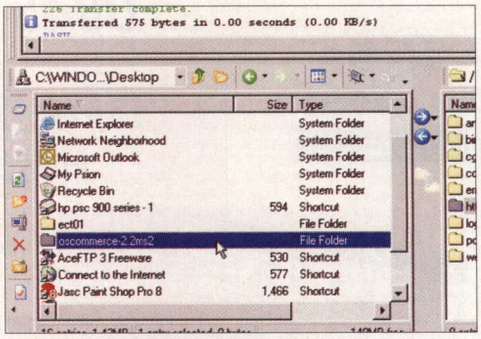
Setting up a site with eCommerce facilities doesn't have to cost a fortune or require vast technical knowledge. Over the next 10 issues, we'll be proving that statement by building a powerful shopping site using free software. You won't have to wait until the end to start selling online, though, as we'll get the site up and running around the halfway mark, and spend the remaining issues adding bells and whistles.

Rather than showing you how to program your own shopping system from the ground up, we're going to be using the Web's best-developed open source shopping software, osCommerce. Open source software is developed by the online community, rather than a commercial company, and the products it creates are free for everyone. We've included the version of the software used for this tutorial on our cover CD. The only other thing you need is a Web hosting package which allows you to use PHP and a MySQL database. The tutorial is based around your computer using Windows and your Web host running a UNIX server, but it should be easy enough to adapt our instructions to other types of computer. ■



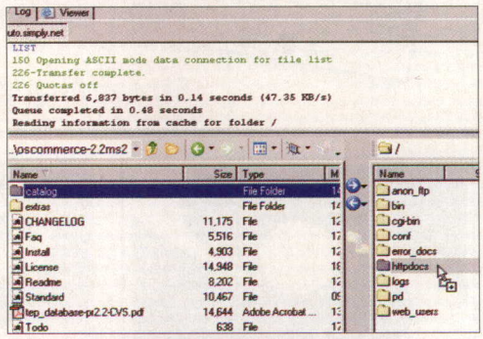
1 UNZIPPING THE SOFTWARE

Open oscommerce-2.2ms2.zip in WinZip. Click the Extract button at the top of the window, and then click on Desktop in the dialog that appears. Finally, click the Extract button and wait for the archive to be expanded onto your desktop before quitting WinZip.



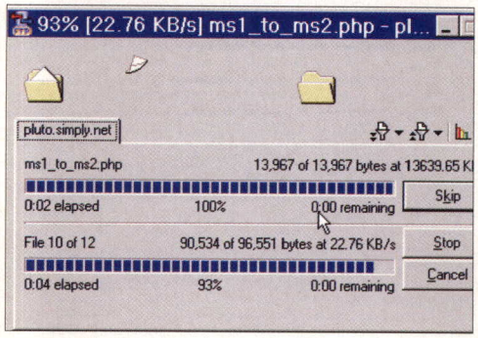
2 LOGGING IN USING FTP

Launch your preferred FTP program – we're using a freeware one available from **freeware.aceftp.com**. Log into your Web server and when you're connected, the server's file listing will appear in one of the FTP program's windows (here, the one on the right).



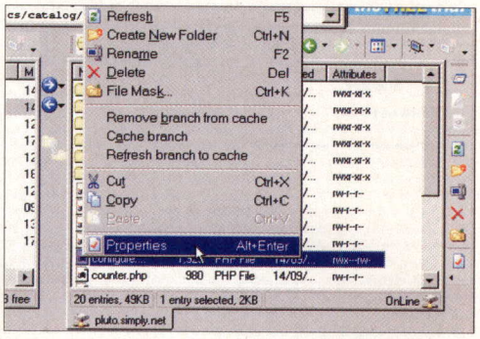
3 UPLOAD OSCOMMERCE

In the local file listing (on the left here), go to the desktop and open the oscommerce-2.2ms2 directory. Upload the contents of the Catalog folder to the server's document root (normally the httpdocs directory) by dragging the Folder icon from the local file list to the server file list.



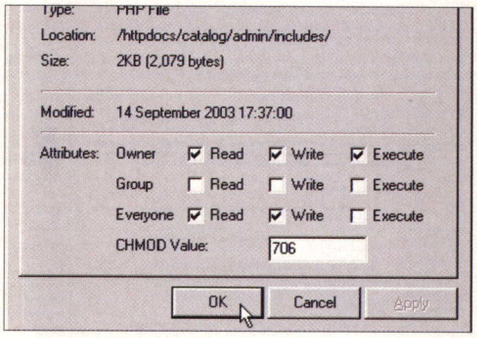
4 WAIT FOR THE TRANSFER

The transfer will take some time, as there are lots of files to upload – it took eight minutes on our broadband connection. When it's done, you need to change the permissions on two of the configuration files on the server before beginning the setup process.



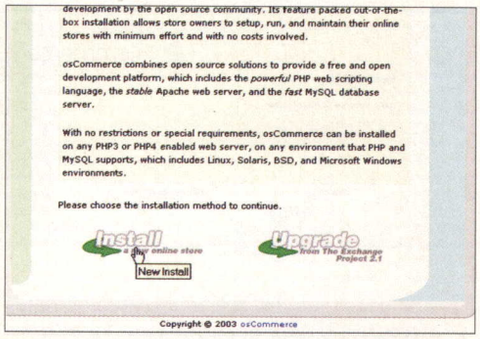
5 CHANGING FILE PERMISSIONS

Open the Catalog folder you've just uploaded, and then the Includes folder inside it. Locate configure.php, right-click on it, and select Properties from the pop-up menu that appears. For different FTP packages the menu labelling will vary slightly.



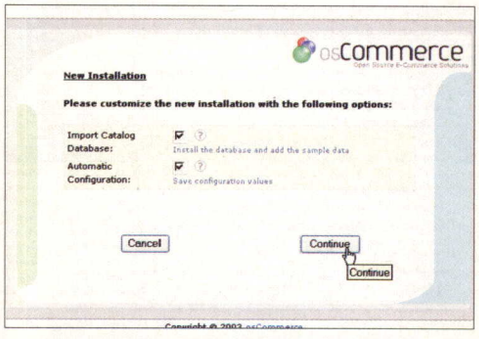
6 ALTERING CHMOD VALUES

Alter the CHMOD Value to 706 and click OK. Leave the Includes directory by clicking the Up Directory button once (a folder with an up arrow on it). Go into the Admin directory, and then the Includes directory inside it. Change the CHMOD Value of the configure.php there to 706.



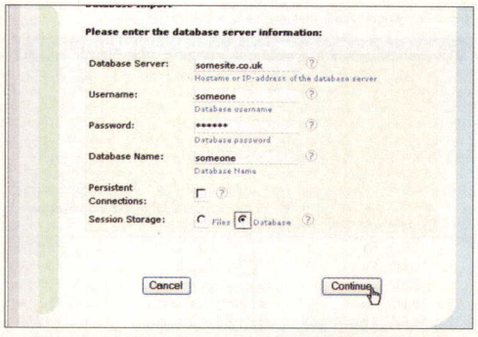
7 START THE WEB-BASED INSTALLATION

Now open your Web browser and enter your Web site address into the Address bar, followed by '/catalog'. For example, you should be aiming for something like www.yoursite.co.uk/catalog. This should bring up the Web page shown here. Click the Install button to begin.



8 SETTING INSTALLATION OPTIONS

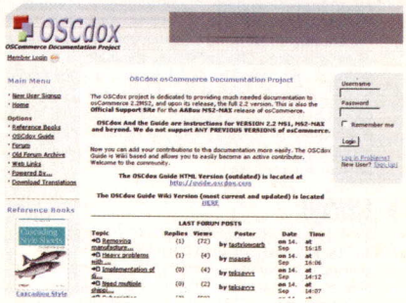
You will be presented with a couple of options for your installation, which are automatically selected. You should leave them selected, as they make the installation easier for you. Click on the question mark symbols to find out how, and then click Continue to move on to the next step.



9 ENTERING MYSQL ACCESS DETAILS

To set up the database, you need to enter the address of the MySQL database server, the username and password to access it, and your database's name. These should have been supplied by your hosting provider. Enter the details, click Database by Session Storage and click Continue.

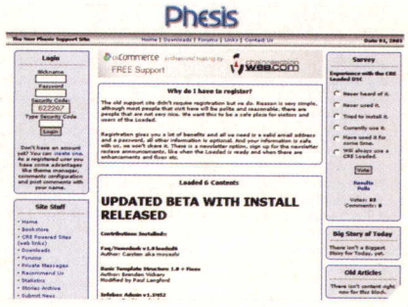
BOOKMARKS



OSCDox

www.oscdox.com

As osCommerce doesn't have any comprehensive official documentation, various people are trying to fill the gap. This is a particularly useful site, and its coverage grows all the time.



PHESIS

www.phesis.co.uk

The open source nature of osCommerce lends itself to people writing bolt-on components to the software. Installing these individually can be a laborious process, so this Web site provides a 'loaded' version of the software with a slew of popular add-ons already installed.

EXPERT ADVICE

SECURE YOUR SHOP WITH SSL

One key issue about any online shopping site is security. We haven't gone into that subject in depth in this instalment of the tutorial, as the site is nowhere near ready to go live. But if you're looking at different Web hosting packages to use in creating your shop, you should consider the possible need for a secure server facility. Ideally you'd secure your shop by having your own SSL (Secure Socket Layers) certificate, which will encrypt the actual sales process and make the all-important padlock appear in your visitors' browser windows. A leading provider of certificates is www.verisign.com, although your hosting provider may have a favoured supplier of their own. Having said all that, your need for a secure server facility depends on how you will take payment at the store. If you plan to use a payment service such as www.PayPal.com or www.WorldPay.com, there's no real need for you to spend money on a secure server.

GEEK SPEAK

DOCUMENT ROOT

The document root is the folder on your Web server where your site's files are stored. The folder is probably called httpdocs or public_html or something similar. When you log into your Web server it may appear that there are no other folders there, but that's only because your login takes you straight to the document root, for a combination of security and convenience reasons.

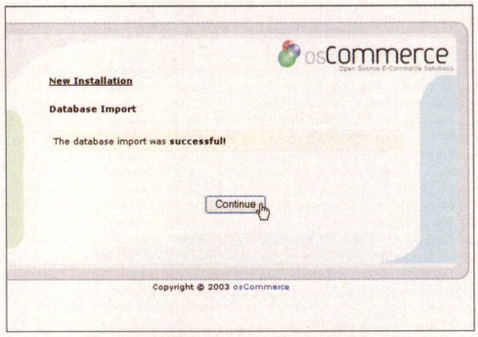
CHMOD

Most Web servers use either UNIX or Windows NT as an Operating System. Both are multi-user systems which include features to restrict the access privileges of users. This complicates the process of running programs, because they will often be stopped from creating or modifying files, as they don't have appropriate access privileges. CHMOD is actually the UNIX command used to alter access privileges, but the word is often used to refer to the privilege settings themselves.

EXPERT ADVICE

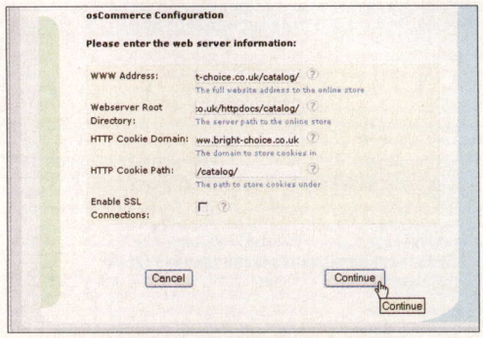
MYSQL

MySQL is a free database technology that's often used in combination with PHP for Web applications. It is secure, fast and in the grand scheme of things, MySQL is one of the simpler database languages to learn. By using PHP and MySQL together it is easy to create and manage sites such as online shops, which both rely on databases to create the contents of their Web pages and also need to write information to databases about orders and other information gathered through the site. It is useful to know a few MySQL terms. The MySQL server is like a Web server, in that it receives requests and sends replies to them. Access to it is controlled with usernames and passwords for each individual database on the server. Each database has a number of tables within it, which contain the data itself. See **www.mysql.com** for more information.



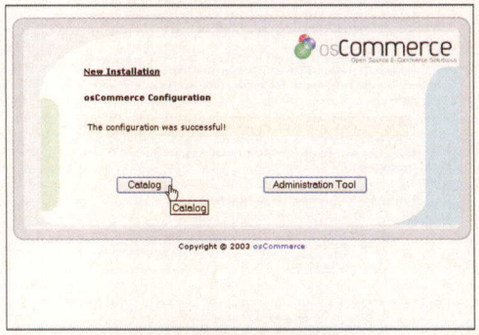
10 TEST THE MYSQL CONNECTION

If a successful test connection has been made to the database, a message explaining that the database is about to be configured will appear. Click Continue and with any luck, you'll see a screen confirming that setup has been successful. Click Continue to move on with configuration.



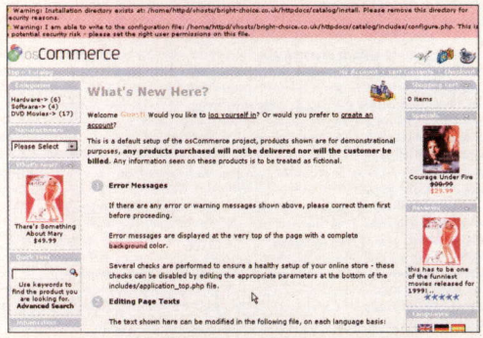
11 CONFIRM SERVER ADDRESSES

Now you're asked to confirm some information about your Web server, including the address where the Catalog folder is, the internal server location of the Catalog folder, and the cookie domain and path. These should all correct, but check them before clicking Continue.



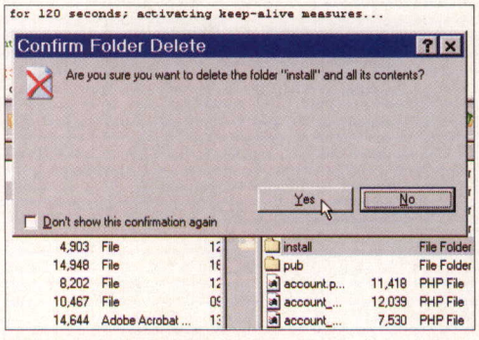
12 FINAL STEPS OF INSTALLATION

You'll be shown the database settings again. Click Continue, and provided your CHMOD alterations in the earlier steps work, the configuration settings should be completed and you'll see the message shown above. Click Catalog to get your first glance of your shop front.



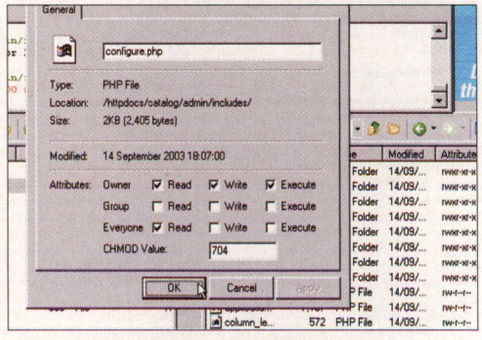
13 FIRST GLIMPSE OF THE CATALOGUE

This is the Web page you should see, which we'll use to show you how to create a custom-designed shop over future issues of the magazine. You'll see two error messages at the top alerting you of security problems. To fix them, go back to the FTP program.



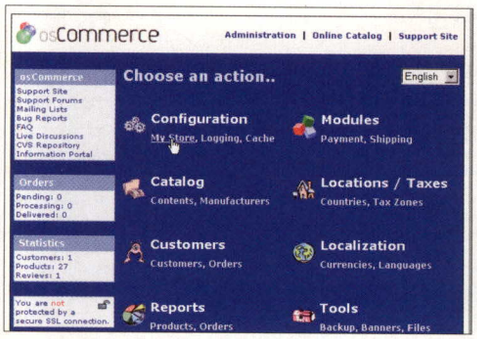
14 DELETE THE INSTALLER

With basic installation complete, you should now dispose of the installation folder as it poses a security risk. In the Catalog folder, click on the Install folder once and press the Delete key. You'll see a warning asking you to confirm deletion. Click Yes.



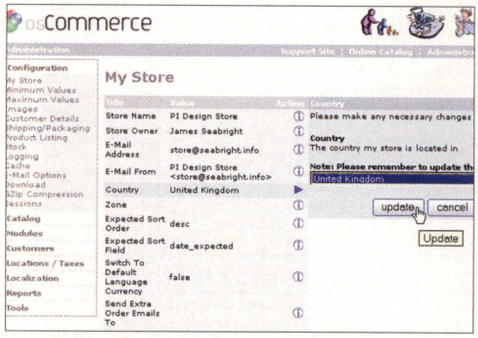
15 REVERSE CHMOD CHANGES

We need to reverse the CHMOD value settings made in steps five and six. Use the same technique to change includes/configure.php and admin/includes/configure.php back to CHMOD values of 704. When done, reload the main Catalog page and the error messages should disappear.



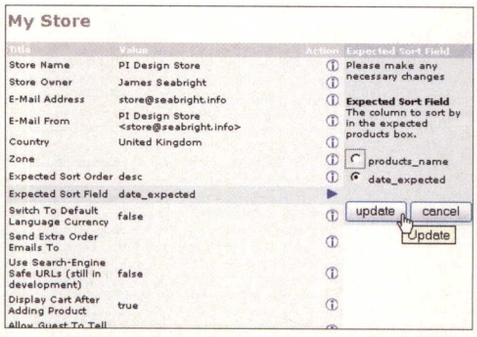
16 GLIMPSE THE CONTROL PANEL

Most osCommerce configuration can be done via the admin Web interface, accessible by adding **/admin** after **/catalog** in the Web page address. See our 'Technique' panel for advice on how to stop others accessing these controls. Click the My Store link as shown above.



17 BASIC SETTINGS FOR YOUR STORE

The Configuration part of the Control panel lets you specify various settings. This is done by clicking the i button by the side of the item you want to change, and then making any desired changes to the information that appears on the right of the page.



18 EXPLAINING SOME OF THE SETTINGS

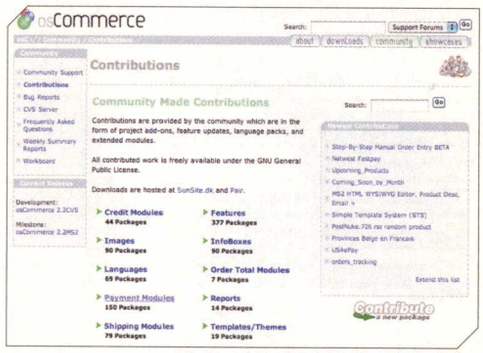
Now we'll explain some of the less obvious settings in the Configuration section. The Expected Sort Order and Field items relate specifically to products that are not actively on sale but appear as 'expected' to be in stock. These settings allow you to decide how this listing is sorted.

IN DETAIL: THE POWER OF OSCOMMERCE

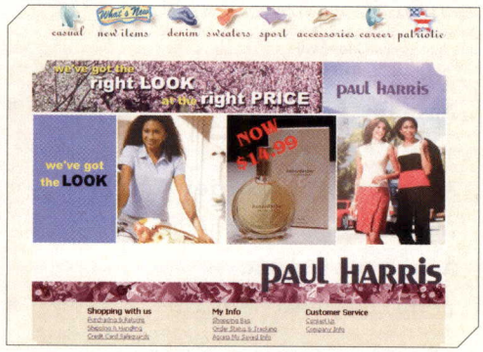
The real beauty of osCommerce is that it can be customised to look and do exactly what you want

Based on what you see in this issue's tutorial, it may be difficult to grasp how osCommerce could create an online shop that looks and feels unique. The standard installation process generates a shop with a particular design which may or may not be suited to your needs. This means you could end up with a load of features on your site that aren't even relevant, while you'd have to omit many of the functions you were hoping to include. And in any case, it isn't a good idea to run with the design created by a piece of free software because you'll end up with a site that looks just like hundreds or even thousands of others on the Net.

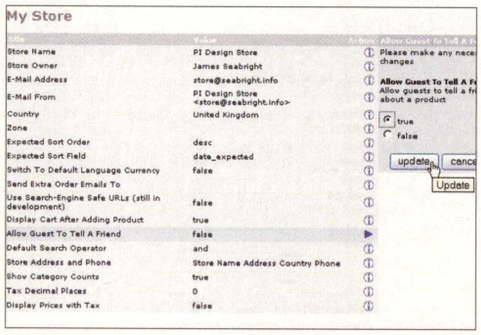
The focus of the future instalments of this tutorial will be on customising osCommerce to your needs. As an open source piece of software, it is designed to be accessible to this kind of customisation, although it does not make it quite as easy as the step-by-step Web-based installation demonstrated over the course of this issue's tutorial. For an idea of exactly how adaptable the osCommerce system is, take a look at **www.paulharris.com**, which uses the software but doesn't look anything like a standard osCommerce shop. And for an idea of the extensions that can be added to the basic osCommerce system, have a browse through the categories at **www.oscommerce.com/community/contributions.** ■



■ Benefit from the experience and generosity of others and implement contributions into your site design

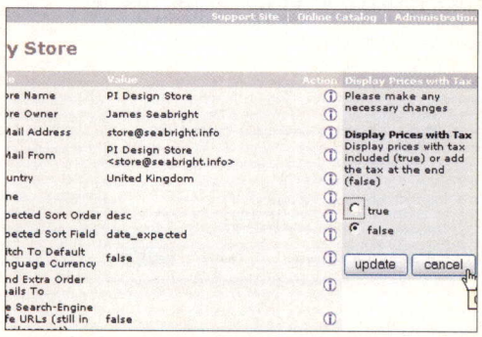


■ Paul Harris' site is a shining example of how the osCommerce software can be tweaked for individual needs



19 TELL A FRIEND FACILITY

If you enable the Allow Guest To Tell A Friend facility, that will enable users who are not logged into the site to send an email recommending a particular product to a friend. If this is set to False, only registered and logged in users will be able to use this facility.



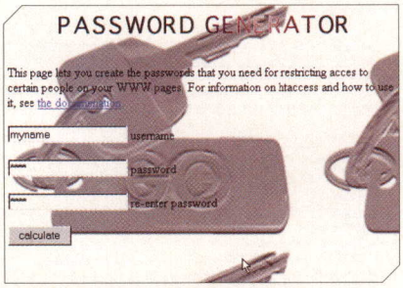
20 TAX AND CALCULATION SETTINGS

The tax settings aren't relevant to most UK stores, as it's normal practice to include VAT in prices, unlike in the USA where tax varies between states and is normally added at the checkout. Of course, you may want to show ex-VAT prices if your store is mainly business-to-business.

TECHNIQUE

PASSWORD PROTECTION

Your Admin control panel is conveniently accessible via the Web, but that poses a security risk. One good way to secure the controls is using the htaccess password protection method shown here, which works with the popular Apache type of Web server



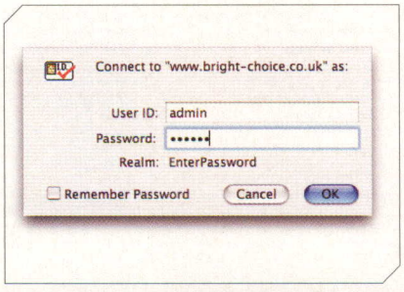
1 MAKING A PASSWORD FILE

You need to encrypt your password and store it in a safe file on your Web server. Go to **www.euronet.nl/~arnow/htpasswd/** to encrypt the password. Use the user name 'admin', and save the result into a file called **.htpasswd**.

```
AuthUserFile
~user/.htpasswd
AuthGroupFile /dev/null
AuthName CatalogAdmin
AuthType Basic
require user admin
```

2 CREATE AN .HTACCESS FILE

The text shown above should be typed into a text editor such as Notepad and saved under the filename **.htaccess** (make sure that **.txt** doesn't get added to the end). You need to change the first line to refer to the location of your password file, as created in the previous step.

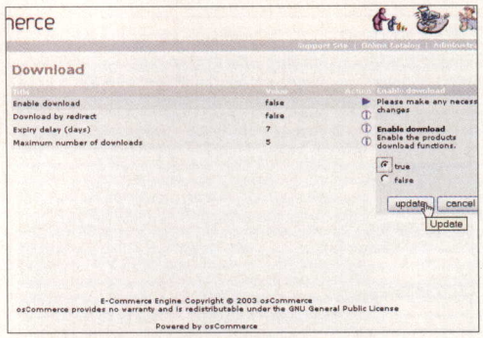


3 TESTING THE PASSWORD PROTECTION

Upload the **.htaccess** file to the Admin folder, and then try to access the Admin control panel via the normal Web address. You should see a password prompt like the one shown here. If your username and password are not recognised, check the path to **.htpasswd** specified in **.htaccess**.

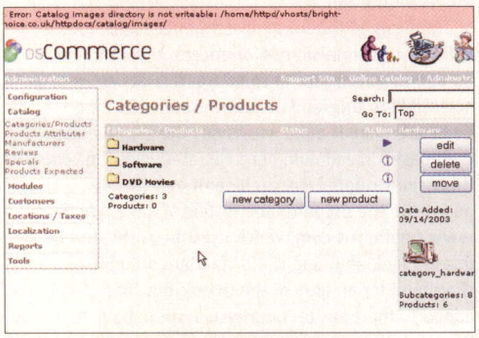
21 SOPHISTICATED SHIPPING

Whether you need to configure any of the information on this page depends on how extensively you plan to use the shipping features of the system. As you'll discover later, it can work out how much to charge for postage, based on destination and weight.



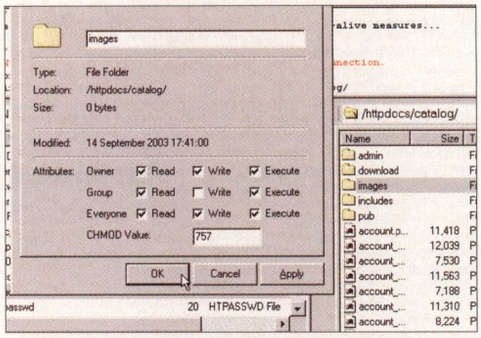
22 DOWNLOADING PRODUCTS

If you're selling items that could be downloaded instead of physically delivered, the facility to handle the download process is well within the abilities of osCommerce. Download Delivery is switched off by default, but you can reverse that here, as well as set other options for the service.



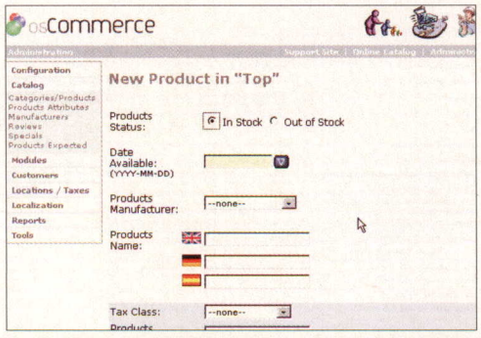
23 THE PRODUCT CATALOGUE

Once you've finished going through the various Configuration settings, click on Catalog in the menu on the left of the page. From here you can create and modify the product catalogue. You'll see an error at the top of the page, which means our work with CHMOD is not yet done.



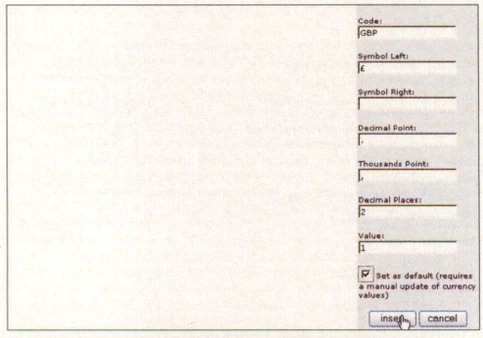
24 SETTING IMAGES PERMISSIONS

To allow the system to make new images for products, the Images directory needs to have its permissions altered. As before, locate the directory in your FTP program, right-click and select Properties, then alter the CHMOD Value to 757. Click OK but don't quit your FTP program quite yet.



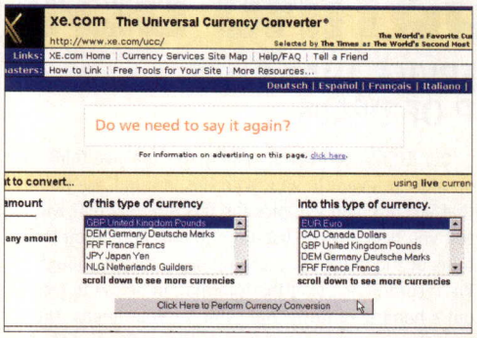
25 CHECKING THE ERROR IS RESOLVED

Reload the Catalog Configuration page to check that the error message has gone. We're not going to look at this section in depth now, as setting up products will be the focus of a future instalment. Suffice to say there are quicker ways than entering each product individually here!



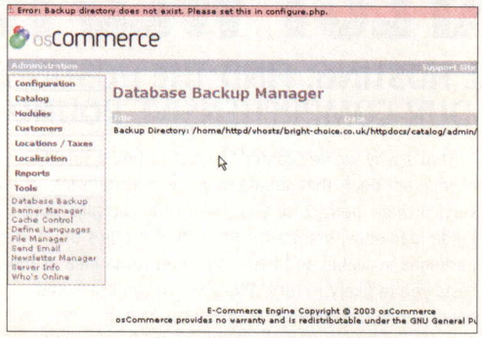
26 SETTING UP POUNDS AS CURRENCY

Click on Localisation and you'll see the Currency page. Pounds are not set up by default, so click New Currency. Enter GBP in Code, £ in Symbol Left, a full stop in Decimal Point, a comma in Thousands Point, 2 in Decimal Places and 1 in Value. Check the default box and then click Insert.



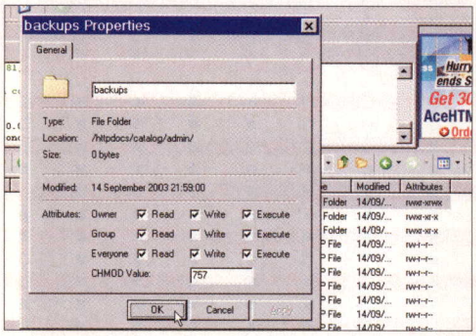
27 SETTING VALUE OF OTHER CURRENCIES

While you don't have to provide currency conversion on your site, it is possible to allow visitors to preview the cost of a product in a different currency by setting the Value in this configuration to the exchange rate with the default currency. You can find out current rates at **www.xe.com/ucc**.



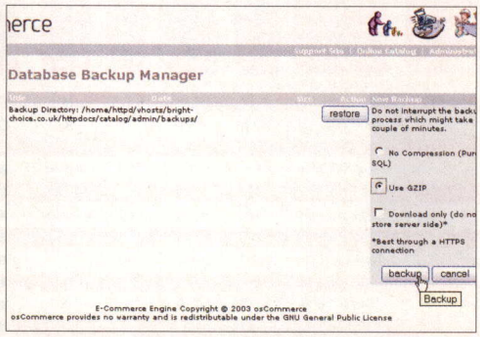
28 CONFIGURING DATABASE BACKUP

When you click on Tools, which is the next section of the control panel, you'll see an error message about your backup directory not existing. You can back up the site database as regularly as you like to guard against data loss, so it's a good idea to sort this problem out.



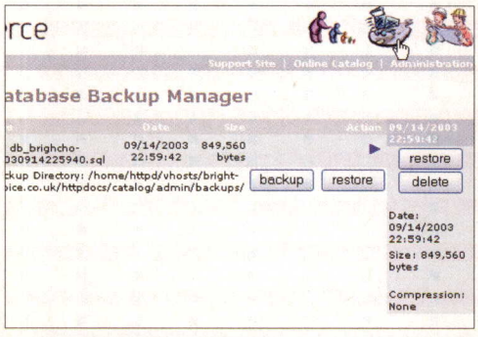
29 CREATING A BACKUP FOLDER

In your FTP program, change to the Admin directory and find the menu option to create a new folder. Give it the name 'Backups' and then access its Properties to change the CHMOD value to 757. Switch back to your Web browser and refresh the page to check that the error has gone.



30 MAKE THE FIRST BACKUP

While there isn't much to back up at the moment, it's a good idea to keep a clean version of the database in case you want to start afresh at some future point. Click the buttons labelled Backup, then Options, and finally Backup to do this.



31 BACKUP COMPLETE

Once the backup has been made, download the relevant file in the Backups folder to your PC using your FTP program as a safety measure against data loss. This should be done each time you back up. The facility to restore a backup is available in the same menu as shown above.

32 LEAVING THE ADMIN SECTION

That's all the basic configuration done for now. Switch back to the main Public Catalog page by clicking the middle icon at the top right of the Web page, and check that everything is working okay by testing out a feature such as the Tell A Friend one shown here.

EXPERT ADVICE

PHP

Hypertext Pre-Processor (PHP) is the scripting language that osCommerce is written in. It has become an increasingly popular and widespread Web technique that is now an almost standard offering from most paid-for Web hosts. PHP is powerful and easy to learn, especially for anyone familiar with JavaScript or Perl. It is especially convenient for designing Web pages, as you can switch between writing normal HTML code and PHP within a document very easily. This lends itself to the creation of well-designed sites with lots of interactive and dynamic content, thanks to PHP. To find out more about the language you can check out the official site at **www.php.net**. Lots of unofficial sites are also worth a visit, including **www.phpbuilder.com**, where you'll find plenty of code snippets and tutorials to help the beginner get started. You don't really need to know much about PHP to successfully follow this tutorial, but it may help you get more from it if you do.

YOUR NEXT MOVE

ABOUT EDITABLE REGIONS

Now that the basic installation of osCommerce is complete, it's time to start thinking in detail about how your shopping site is going to be designed and structured. From this tutorial you'll have a good idea of the basic capabilities of osCommerce, and you now need to work out which of them will be applied to your site, and which are not required at the moment. If you don't ship products abroad, for instance, there's no point offering currency conversion on the site. Over the coming issues these choices will be put into action. And as for the next issue, we'll be focusing on how to alter the template behind the osCommerce system to allow you to make sweeping changes to the look of the shop.

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PICK THE PERFECT WEB HOSTING DEAL

FROM ECOMMERCE TO PERSONAL HOSTING, FIND THE HOSTING SERVICE THAT'S PERFECT FOR YOUR NEEDS WITH OUR COMPREHENSIVE ROUND-UP OF DEALS

Picking a Web host is a decision often left to the end of the Web creation process. Let's face it, we've all been guilty of concentrating so much on the design of the site that we've ignored the importance of signing up for a good hosting deal. Hosting is of the utmost importance, though – after all, this is where your site will be housed, so it's imperative that you find a service that not only provides you with the services you need, but also with good reliability.

That's why we've scoured the Net to find a selection of relevant deals that should help you ascertain the service that's perfect for you. The aim in compiling this guide is to allow you to see the different types of packages available and help you glean some idea of the costs you're likely to face. While we haven't included every single deal offered by the firms included, we have listed the products that we think are most relevant to our readers.

Our listings contain the categories that we think will be most relevant to you. With this in mind, we hope that we can help you pick the hosting deal that will suit you best – don't just jump in and sign up on the basis of the figures you see on these pages, though. We recommend using the information below to pick out a handful of firms that cater for your needs. The next step is to contact each directly to discuss your requirements further.

KEEPING UP TO DATE

While we try and ensure that all the information in our listings is up to date, the occasional error does creep through. If you would like to update your current details, drop an email to **webdesigner@paragon.co.uk** with the information you would like changed.

NAME AND URL	PACKAGE	PHONE NUMBER	COST PER YEAR	WEB SPACE	MONTHLY BANDWIDTH	POP3 ACCOUNTS	FRONTPAGE EXTENSIONS	DATABASE SUPPORT	SHOPPING CART	VIRUS FILTER	FIREWALL	PHONE SUPPORT	EMAIL SUPPORT	WEB CONTROL PANEL	SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT
123 reg www.123-reg.co.uk	Regular	0900 11 22 123	45.87	250Mb	10	■	□	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	□
123 reg www.123-reg.co.uk	Xtra	0900 11 22 123	269.87	500Mb	25	■	□	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	□
123-reg (www.123-reg.co.uk)	123-reg xtra	0900 2211123	£59.88	500Mb	2Gb	25	□	■	□	□	□	■	■	■	□
2020Media (www.2020media.com)	Everyday	0845 166 7456	£100	100Mb	2Gb	Unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
2020Media (www.2020media.com)	PHP	0845 166 7456	£150	100Mb	2Gb	Unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
2020Media (www.2020media.com)	JAVA Tomcat	0845 166 7456	£175	100Mb	2Gb	Unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
2020Media (www.2020media.com)	Coldfusion	0845 166 7456	£250	100Mb	2Gb	Unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
4d hosting (www.4dhosting.com)	Bronze Package	0845 166 8386	£40.00	10Mb	500Mb	2	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	□
4d hosting (www.4dhosting.com)	Gold Package	0845 166 8386	£79.99	50Mb	2Gb	50	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	□
4d hosting (www.4dhosting.com)	Titanium Package	0845 166 8386	£149.99	500Mb	5Gb	500	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	■
4d hosting (www.4dhosting.com)	Reseller Package	0845 166 8386	£299.99	1Gb	10Gb	1000	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	■
Alien Hosting (www.alien-hosting.net)	HomeHost	0870 746 1507	£30.00	100Mb	512Mb	30	■	■	□	□	□	□	■	■	□
Alien Hosting (www.alien-hosting.net)	Pro-Host	0870 746 1507	£60.00	250Mb	1Gb	100	■	■	□	□	□	□	■	■	□
Alien Hosting (www.alien-hosting.net)	E-Comm	0870 746 1507	£150.00	500Mb	5Gb	300	■	■	■	□	□	■	■	■	□
Amen (www.amen.uk.com)	windows	0870 444 6778	150	300	-	unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	■	■
Amen (www.amen.uk.com)	linux	0870 444 6778	150	300	-	unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	■	■
Amen (www.amen.uk.com)	platinum	0870 444 6778	156	200	-	unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	■	■
Amen (www.amen.uk.com)	platinum	0870 444 6778	258	300	-	unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	■	■
9NetAvenue (www.9netave.uk.net)	Starter	0870 8726560	99	50	1.5Gb	10	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
9NetAvenue (www.9netave.uk.net)	Professional	0870 8726560	199	100	2.5Gb	25	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
9NetAvenue (www.9netave.uk.net)	Corporate	0870 8726560	399	500	5Gb	100	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
BeamHost (www.beamhost.co.uk)	Economy	0871 277 9827	£120	1Gb	50Gb	300	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	■	□
Cheapnet (www.cheapnet.co.uk)	ISP For Small Businesses	0870 516 8160	£96	Unlimited	10Gb	Unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Christian Technology Ltd (www.christiantechnology.co.uk)	Base Package	0870 742 0530	£94	25Mb	1Gb	Unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	□
Clara.net (www.clara.net)	Clarahost Lite	0845 355 1000	29.99	10	1Gb	10	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Clara.net (www.clara.net)	Clarahost Advanced	0845 355 1000	699	500	30Gb	200	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
CWCS Managed Hosting (www.cwcs.co.uk)	CWCS Entry Package	0870 703 1000	£120	100Mb	1.5Gb	5	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	■
DataGate (www.datagate.co.uk)	Exchange Hosting	08000 19 98 19	From £204	100Mb	Unlimited	0	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	■	■
DataGate (www.datagate.co.uk)	Unix Shared Business Hosting	08000 19 98 19	£249	200Mb	6Gb	100	□	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	■
Datex (www.datex.net)	Level1	0800 652 2110	185	50	1gb	10	■	■	□	□	■	■	■	■	■
Datex (www.datex.net)	Level2	0800 652 2110	259	100	2gb	25	■	■	□	□	■	■	■	■	■
Datex (www.datex.net)	Level3	0800 652 2110	330	200	3Gb	50	■	■	□	□	■	■	■	■	■
Datex (www.datex.net)	Level4	0800 652 2110	369	300	4Gb	80	■	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■
Datex (www.datex.net)	Level5	0800 652 2110	409	400	5Gb	120	■	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■
Datex (www.datex.net)	Level6	0800 652 2110	549	600	6Gb	200	■	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■
dc-hosting (dc-hosting.com)	Personal	n/a	£25	10Mb	256Mb	5	■	■	□	■	■	□	■	■	□
dc-hosting (dc-hosting.com)	Professional Bronze	n/a	£40	100Mb	512Mb	10	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	■	□
dc-hosting (dc-hosting.com)	Professional Silver	n/a	£80	200Mb	1Gb	20	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	■	□
dc-hosting (dc-hosting.com)	Professional Gold	n/a	£140	300Mb	2Gb	30	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	■	□
dc-hosting (dc-hosting.com)	Professional Platinum	n/a	£250	500Mb	4Gb	50	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	■	□
Dedicated Servers (www.dedicated-servers.co.uk)	Linux entry	0870 333 0365	99/month	40gb	30Gb	variable	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	■	■
Dedicated Servers (www.dedicated-servers.co.uk)	Windows entry	0870 333 0365	199/month	40gb	30Gb	variable	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	■	■

Key: ■ Yes □ No

- Domain Names
- Virtual Web Hosting
- Dedicated Solutions
- Custom Enterprise Servers

- Advanced Control Panel
- Windows or Linux platforms
- 30 Day Money Back Guarantee
- Award winning Support

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Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Reseller Unix	0870 7414151	£470	Unlimited	20Gb	Unlimited	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	□
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Reseller Windows	0870 7414151	£587.50	Unlimited	20Gb	Unlimited	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	□
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Enterprise Plan	0870 7414151	£105.75	100Mb	2Gb	20	■	□	□	■	■	■	■	■	□
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Commerce Plan	0870 7414151	£211.50	250Mb	5Gb	50	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	□
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Designer Plan	0870 7414151	£141	100Mb	2Gb	20	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	□
Donhost (www.donhost.co.uk)	Developer Plan	0870 741415	£305.50	250Mb	5Gb	50	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	□
Dziner Solutions (www.dzinersolutions.co.uk)	Windows Shared	n/a	44.99	100	2Gb	100	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	■	■
Dziner Solutions (www.dzinersolutions.co.uk)	Unix Shared Starter	n/a	19.99	50	1Gb	10	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	■	■
Dziner Solutions (www.dzinersolutions.co.uk)	Unix Shared Standard	n/a	44.99	100	2Gb	100	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	■	■
Dziner Solutions (www.dzinersolutions.co.uk)	Unix Shared Premier	n/a	79.99	200	3Gb	200	■	■	■	■	■	□	■	■	■
Efficient Hosting (www.efficienthosting.co.uk)	Basic Plan	n/a	£167.40	20Mb	1Gb	5	■	□	□	□	■	□	■	■	□
Efficient Hosting (www.efficienthosting.co.uk)	Standard Plan	n/a	£239.40	75Mb	2Gb	40	■	■	■	□	■	□	■	■	□
Efficient Hosting (www.efficienthosting.co.uk)	Advanced Plan	n/a	£287.40	125Mb	3Gb	60	■	■	■	□	■	□	■	■	□
Efficient Hosting (www.efficienthosting.co.uk)	Professional Plan	n/a	£359.40	275Mb	5Gb	80	■	■	■	□	■	□	■	■	□
eHosting (www.ehosting.co.uk)	Home & Business 200 Account	0161 236 2241	£49.99	200Mb	10Gb	50	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
EliteUKServe (eliteukserve.net)	Business Kick Start Linux	0871 717 0390	49	50	3Gb	20	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	□	■
EliteUKServe (eliteukserve.net)	Business Kick Start Windows	0871 717 0390	75	50	3Gb	20	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	□	■
EliteUKServe (eliteukserve.net)	Business Standard Linux	0871 717 0390	99	100	3Gb	100	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	□	■
EliteUKServe (eliteukserve.net)	Windows	0871 717 0390	125	100	3Gb	100	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	□	■
EliteUKServe (eliteukserve.net)	Business Enterprise Linux	0871 717 0390	199	250	5Gb	250	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	□	■
EliteUKServe (eliteukserve.net)	Business Enterprise Windows	0871 717 0390	225	250	5Gb	250	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	□	■
EliteUKServe (eliteukserve.net)	Business Pro Linux	0871 717 0390	399	500	10Gb	500	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	□	■
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Business	0870 888 3600	149.99	2Gb	n/a	unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Business Pro	0870 888 3600	249.99	5Gb	n/a	unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Net Pro	0870 888 3600	299.99	3Gb	n/a	unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Net Standard	0870 888 3600	199.99	2Gb	n/a	unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Starter	0870 888 3600	19.99	100	n/a	15	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	■	■
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Home	0870 888 3600	49.99	500	n/a	100	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
FastHosts (www.fasthosts.co.uk)	Home Pro	0870 888 3600	69.99	1Gb	n/a	300	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Giacom (www.giacom.net)	Business Pro	0800 542 7500	199	100	2Gb	100	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Hostextra (www.hostextra.co.uk)	Pro-Host	08702 501 500	99.45	100	10Gb	200		■				■	■	■	
Global Gold (www.globalgold.co.uk)	Unix launcher	0870 004 4444	78	50	5gb	5	■	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■
Global Gold (www.globalgold.co.uk)	NT launcher		180	50	5gb	5	■	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■
Haisoft (www.haisoft.co.uk)	HaiSoft Perso	0870 080 4247	£14.90	100Mb	1Gb	Unlimited	■	■	□	□	■	■	■	■	■
HaiSoft (www.haisoft.co.uk)	HaiSoft Pro	0870 080 4247	£49.90	500Mb	10Gb	Unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
HaiSoft (www.haisoft.co.uk)	HaiSoft eCommerce	0870 080 4247	£99.90	750Mb	20Gb	Unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
HostSupreme (www.hostsupreme.co.uk)	Windows 2000 Unlimited Plan	0208 777 8881	£99.50	Unlimited	Unmetered	Unlimited	■	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■
HostSupreme (www.hostsupreme.co.uk)		0208 777 8881	£99.50	1Gb	5Gb	1000	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Hotchilli (www.hotchilli.com)	Windows Silver	08702 555 555	175	50	2Gb	10	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	■
Hotchilli (www.hotchilli.com)	Windows Gold	08702 555 555	295	100	3Gb	25	■	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	■
Hotchilli (www.hotchilli.com)	Windows Platinum	08702 555 555	355	200	5Gb	50	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Hotchilli (www.hotchilli.com)	Silver	08702 555 555	115	100	2Gb	10	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	■	■
Hotchilli (www.hotchilli.com)	Linux Gold	08702 555 555	175	200	3Gb	25	□	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	■
Hotchilli (www.hotchilli.com)	Linux Platinum	08702 555 555	295	400	5Gb	50	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Lite	08712 773494	14.99	25	1Gb	5	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Starter	08712 773494	23.49	50	1Gb	20	■	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Standard	08712 773494	52.49	100	1Gb	50	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Professional	08712 773494	68.99	250	1Gb	unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Business	08712 773494	119.99	500	1Gb	unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Ideal Hosting (idealhosting.co.uk)	Corporate	08712 773494	199.99	1000	1Gb	unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Unix Basic 50	0870 160 5555	70	50	1Gb	5	□	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Unix Frontpage 50	0870 160 5555	100	50	1Gb	5	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Unix Standard 200	0870 160 5555	160	200	2Gb	20	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Unix Superior 500	0870 160 5555	220	500	3Gb	50	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Windows 50	0870 160 5555	100	50	1Gb	5	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Windows 200	0870 160 5555	190	200	2Gb	20	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Internetters (www.internetters.co.uk)	Windows 500	0870 160 5555	260	500	3Gb	50	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Inweb (www.inweb.co.uk)	Example1	0800 612222	200	50	2.5Gb	1	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Magic Moments www.magic-moments.com	Magic Entry	0115 917 0000	99.95	600Mb	1	■	□	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	
Magic Moments www.magic-moments.com	Magic Pro	0115 917 0000	199.95	1000Mb	1000	■	■	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	
Magic Moments www.magic-moments.com	Magic Business	0115 917 0000	199	1000Mb	1000	■	■	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	
Magic Moments www.magic-moments.com	Magic Business e-commerce	0115 917 0000	499	1000Mb	1000	■	■	■	□	□	■	■	■	■	
Magic Moments www.magic-moments.com	Magic Reseller	0115 917 0000	500	Unlimited	Unlimited	■	■	□	□	□	■	■	■	■	

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NameHog (www.namehog.net)	Home User Package	0870 9059 444	£35.25	50Mb	500Mb	5	☐	☐	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
NameHog (www.namehog.net)	Advanced User Package	0870 9059 444	£58.75	100Mb	750Mb	10	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
NameHog (www.namehog.net)	Small Business Package	0870 9059 444	£82.25	175Mb	1Gb	15	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
NameHog (www.namehog.net)	Large Business Package	0870 9059 444	£105.75	300Mb	1.2Gb	20	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
NameHog (www.namehog.net)	Premium Business Package	0870 9059 444	£176.25	500Mb	1.5Gb	50	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
NetBenefit (www.netbenefit.com)	Business Package	0870 264 2298	£199	100Mb	2Gb	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Netcetera (www.inetc.net)	Home package	0800 2987 214	£60	100Mb	2Gb	1	■	☐	☐	■	■	■	■	■	☐
Netcetera (www.inetc.net)	Commerce	0800 2987 214	£180	200Mb	4Gb	10	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	☐
Netcetera (www.inetc.net)	Reseller	0800 2987 214	£450	2Gb	20Gb	Unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	☐
Netcetera (www.inetc.net)	.NETppliance 2000	0800 2987 214	£2000	80Gb	12Gb	Unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Netcetera (www.inetc.net)	.NETppliance 2400	0800 2987 214	£3000	160Gb	24Gb	Unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Netcetera (www.inetc.net)	.NETppliance 3000	0800 2987 214	£4000	2x73Gb SCSI	30Gb	Unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Netcetera (www.inetc.net)	.NETppliance 1800	0800 2987 214	£780	40Gb	20Gb	Unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Netplan Internet Solutions (www.netplan.co.uk)	Windows Shared .net Basic	0870 751 8345	120	50	1Gb	1	■	☐	☐	■	■	■	■	■	■
Netplan Internet Solutions (www.netplan.co.uk)	Windows Shared .net Moderate	0870 751 8345	200	80	2Gb	10	■	☐	☐	■	■	■	■	■	■
Netplan Internet Solutions (www.netplan.co.uk)	Windows Shared .net large	0870 751 8345	350	100	3.5Gb	40	■	■	☐	■	■	■	■	■	■
Netplan Internet Solutions (www.netplan.co.uk)	Windows Shared .net Carrier	0870 751 8345	600	200	5Gb	80	■	■	☐	■	■	■	■	■	■
Netplan Internet Solutions (www.netplan.co.uk)	Linux Shared Hostplan Basic	0870 751 8345	65	100	500Mb	1	■	☐	☐	■	■	■	■	■	■
Netplan Internet Solutions (www.netplan.co.uk)	Linux Shared Hostplan Professional	0870 751 8345	140	200	1Gb	10	■	☐	☐	■	■	■	■	■	■
Netplan Internet Solutions (www.netplan.co.uk)	Shared Hostplan Large	0870 751 8345	200	300	3Gb	25	■	■	☐	■	■	■	■	■	■
Netplan Internet Solutions (www.netplan.co.uk)	Shared Hostplan Carrier	0870 751 8345	500	2Gb	5Gb	50	■	■	☐	■	■	■	■	■	■
Netscalibur (www.netscalibur.com)	Netscalibur Web Unix	0800 072 0000	324	100	5Gb	1	☐	■	■	☐	☐	■	■	■	■
Netscalibur (www.netscalibur.com)	Netscalibur Web Windows	0800 072 0000	324	100	5Gb	1	■	■	■	☐	☐	■	■	■	■
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Standard Hosting	01329 226722	50	0	0	1	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	■	■	☐	■
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Business Bronze Unix	01329 226722	100	250	250Mb	1	■	☐	☐	■	■	■	■	☐	■
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Business Gold Unix	01329 226722	149	1Gb	1Gb	1	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	☐	■
NewNet (www.newnet.co.uk)	Business Gold Windows	01329 226722	149	1Gb	1Gb	1	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	☐	■
Pay As You Host (www.pay-as-you-host.com)	Standard	0870 284 0287	£47.88	50Mb	512Mb	Unlimited	☐	■	☐	☐	■	■	■	■	■
Positive Internet Company (www.positive-internet.com)	Z account	0800 316 1006	£293.75	120Mb	10Gb	Unlimited	☐	■	☐	■	■	☐	■	■	☐
Positive Internet Company (www.positive-internet.com)	Dolphin	0800 316 1006	£2172.58	2x20Gb	40-60Gb	Unlimited	☐	■	☐	■	■	☐	■	■	☐
Positive Internet Company (www.positive-internet.com)	Fully managed servers	0800 316 1006	°£5287.50	2x70Gb SCSI	80-250Gb	Unlimited	☐	■	☐	■	■	■	■	■	■
Simply (www.simply.com)	Simply Basic	01684 893020	47.88	10Mb	1Gb	1	☐	☐	☐	■	☐	■	■	■	■
Simply (www.simply.com)	Simply Soho	01684 893020	71.88	250Mb	3Gb	10	■	☐	☐	■	☐	■	■	■	■
Simply (www.simply.com)	Simply Enterprise	01684 893020	107.88	500Mb	10Gb	50	■	■	☐	■	■	■	■	■	■
Simply (www.simply.com)	Simply Corporate	01684 893020	203.88	1Gb	20Gb	100	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Simply (www.simply.com)	Simply Designer	01684 893020	239.88	1Gb	20Gb	200	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Simply (www.simply.com)	Simply Reseller	01684 893020	479.88	unlimited	30Gb	unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Skymarket (www.skymarket.co.uk)	Standard 1	0800 321 7788	49	10Mb	2Gb	1	☐	■	☐	■	■	■	■	■	■
Skymarket (www.skymarket.co.uk)	Standard 2	0800 321 7788	69	20Mb	2Gb	1	☐	■	☐	■	■	■	■	■	■
Skymarket (www.skymarket.co.uk)	Premium 1	0800 321 7788	99	25Mb	2Gb	1	■	■	☐	■	■	■	■	■	■
Skymarket (www.skymarket.co.uk)	Premium 2	0800 321 7788	149	50Mb	2Gb	1	■	■	☐	■	■	■	■	■	■
SO Hosts (www.sohosts.com)	Standard	0845 644 1080	£29.99	500Mb	Unlimited	Unlimited	■	■	☐	■	■	■	■	■	■
theName.co.uk (www.thename.co.uk)	Parking	08707 65 63 64	£52.88	25Mb	500Mb	15	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	☐
theName.co.uk (www.thename.co.uk)	Forwarding	08707 65 63 64	From £15	n/a	500Mb	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	■	■	■	■	■	☐
theName.co.uk (www.thename.co.uk)	Hosting	08707 65 63 64	From £7.50	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	■	■	■	■	☐
Titan Internet (www.titanhosts.net)	Win50	0845 125 9500	£58.75	50Mb	500Mb	5	■	☐	☐	■	■	■	■	■	■
Titan Internet (www.titanhosts.net)	Win100	0845 125 9500	£117.50	100Mb	1Gb	20	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Titan Internet (www.titanhosts.net)	Win200	0845 125 9500	£235	200Mb	2Gb	Unlimited	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
ValueWebHosts (www.valuewebhosts.com)	Plan 1	n/a	£8.99	Unlimited	125Mb	Unlimited	■	■	☐	☐	■	☐	■	■	☐
WebFusion (www.webfusion.co.uk)	Business Pro	0115 9170000	£199	100Mb	10Gb	1000	■	■	☐	☐	☐	■	■	■	☐
WebFusion www.webfusion.co.uk	WebFusion Entry	0115 917 0000	99.95	600Mb	?	1	■	☐	☐	☐	☐	■	■	■	■
WebFusion www.webfusion.co.uk	WebFusion Pro	0115 917 0000	199.95	1000Mb	?	1000	■	■	☐	☐	☐	■	■	■	■
WebFusion www.webfusion.co.uk	WebFusion Business	0115 917 0000	199	1000Mb	?	1000	■	■	☐	☐	☐	■	■	■	■
WebFusion www.webfusion.co.uk	WebFusion Business eCommerce	0115 917 0000	499	1000Mb	?	1000	■	■	■	☐	☐	■	■	■	■
WebFusion www.webfusion.co.uk	WebFusion Reseller	0115 917 0000	500	Unlimited	?	Unlimited	■	■	☐	☐	☐	■	■	■	■
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Standard	0870 050 0080	39.95	50Mb	1Gb	5	■	■	■	☐	☐	■	■	■	■
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Standard Plus	0870 050 0080	99.95	50Mb	2Gb	10	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Business	0870 050 0080	79.95	100Mb	3Gb	15	■	■	■	☐	☐	■	■	■	■
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Business Plus	0870 050 0080	159.95	150Mb	4Gb	30	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Professional	0870 050 0080	179.95	250Mb	7Gb	50	■	■	■	☐	☐	■	■	■	■
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Hosting Professional Plus	0870 050 0080	299	500Mb	10Gb	100	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Standard Multiweb	0870 050 0080	64.95	75Mb	1.5Gb	10	■	■	■	☐	☐	■	■	■	■
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Standard Multiweb Plus	0870 050 0080	149.95	100Mb	2.5Gb	15	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Business Multiweb	0870 050 0080	149.95	200Mb	4Gb	25	■	■	■	☐	☐	■	■	■	■
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Business Multiweb Plus	0870 050 0080	299	250Mb	5Gb	40	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Professional Multiweb	0870 050 0080	249	500Mb	7.5Gb	100	■	■	■	☐	☐	■	■	■	■
Xcalibre (www.xcalibre.co.uk)	Professional Multiweb Plus	0870 050 0080	499	500Mb	10Gb	150	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

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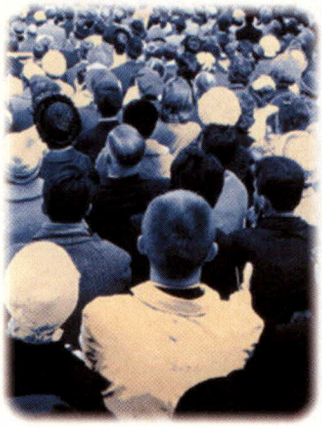

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'Although we run a very successful online business it's always good to get outside feedback. Survival is about adapting your business to the customers needs. Site-Report.com allowed us to do just that!'

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ADSL Broadband

TECH SUPPORT

THE EXPERTS

WHO'S ON CALL?

MARK SHUFFLEBOTTOM

Mark lectures on the BA Hons Interactive Media course at Bournemouth University, where he teaches digital imaging, interface design and 3D applications. Mark is our resident Flash expert, so send your vector-based animation anger to him and he'll find a cure. This issue, Mark dispenses advice on creating interesting buttons and also shows a neat trick for removing image wobble.

CHRIS SCHMIDT

Chris is a freelance writer with specialist areas in topics as diverse as Dreamweaver and digital music creation. He is also a joint partner in the track5 Web design agency (**www.track5.co.uk**). All of this means that he's perfect to take charge of your Dreamweaver problems. Chris is also the man to cure your sites with a makeover – see his first Site SOS on page 116.

GEORGE CAIANS

George is a freelance illustrator who specialises in Photoshop, After Effects and 3D modelling. We've procured George's formidable talents as our regular Photoshop expert, so any time you have a problem with your pixels or you're at a loss with layers, call upon George. This issue's Photoshop help includes some impressive tips on cutting images away from complex backgrounds.

PHILIP BENNISON

Philip has been working in new media for nearly a decade and has been writing coding tutorials for the past six years. Over his career, he's worked on everything from corporate Web sites to small business eCommerce enterprises. We've signed Philip up to be your Web page developer expert, so if your code and scripts are causing you strife, send him an email.

CONTACT US:

Tech Support,
Practical Internet Web Designer,
Highbury - Paragon,
Paragon House,
St Peter's Road,
Bournemouth, BH1 2JS

Email: techsupport@paragon.co.uk

Unfortunately we cannot answer help requests in person

FLASH

HAVING PROBLEMS WITH VECTOR-BASED ANIMATION? ALLOW MARK SHUFFLEBOTTOM TO CURE YOUR PROBLEMS WITH A SMILE

SMALLER IS DEFINITELY BETTER

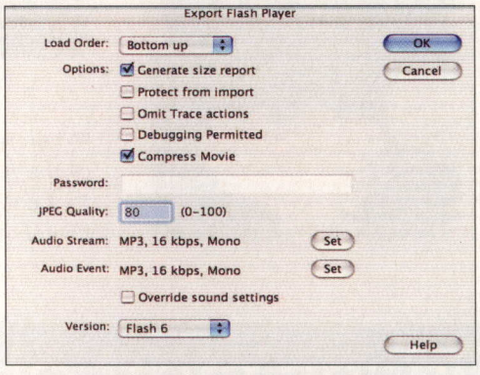
Q I am fairly new to Flash and am currently trying to create a Web site which is small in size so that my visitors have a very short download time. Can you give me some helpful pointers as to how to go about constructing something like this?

Colin Garside

A This is a very good question to ask right at the start of your Web site production, Colin. The first consideration to take into account is that vector graphics are much smaller than photographs or raster images created in either Photoshop or Paint Shop Pro. Wherever possible, create your graphics in Flash as these will be vector-based and will save valuable file size. A mistake Flash newbies often make is that, because vectors are smaller, they use the Trace Bitmap command found under the Modify menu to convert photographs into vectors. Unless you limit the colours to just a few, you'll probably end up with an image much larger in file size than the original photograph. This is because there can be a large amount of points created and each point bumps the file size up. To get round this, you can use the Optimize option from the Modify menu to reduce the number of points.

If you're trying to find out how big individual graphics are, it can be a good idea to generate a size report when you export your Flash file. This will give you a text file that lists all graphics and their file size, so you can see which graphics will cause big downloads for your visitors.

Wherever possible, try to reuse graphics, creating them first of all as symbols in the Library. It's amazing how much space this will save you, even if you're only using different coloured rectangles on the screen. Create one in the library and place the same instance on the stage as many times as you need, changing the size or the tint on the stage through the Properties palette if necessary.



Generate a size report when you export your Flash file and you'll always know how large your graphics are

Rather than create a whole Web site in one Flash file, create each page or section separately and load the appropriate section using the loadmovie command placed on a button. Each Flash movie will be loaded as needed, which is much smaller in file size.

Lastly you can create a very simple piece of animation at the start of each section you're loading which will play while other content is loading, allowing for almost seamless transitions as each part is loaded.

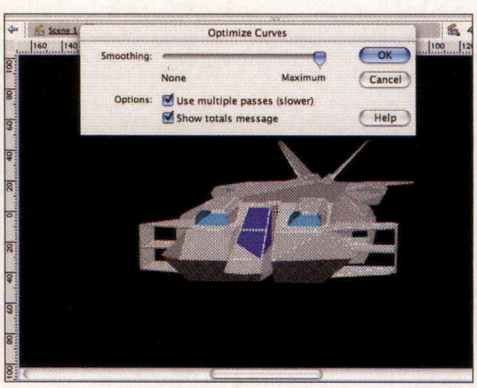
Hopefully these pointers should see you create a successful Flash site, and don't forget to let us know when you've finished.

FLICK MY SWITCH

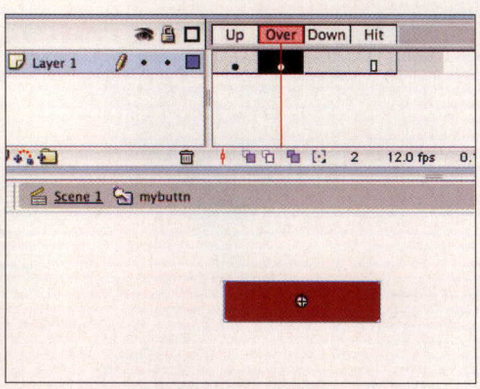
Q I have just finished creating my Web site and I'm not happy with the buttons I've made. Basically, I'd like to be able to make them more interesting. Do you have any tips for improving them?

Craig Heyes

A A great way to improve on any button is to animate it. To do this, first of all create a static graphic of your button in the library, then create a



Keep the number of points down in your vector illustrations to ensure slinky file sizes



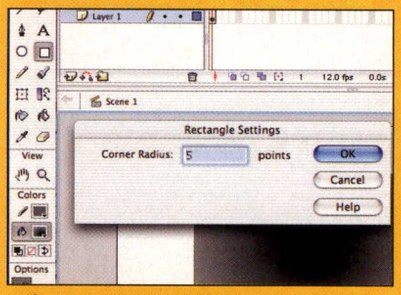
Animating buttons is a quick and effective way of giving your site a bit of interest

EXPERT ADVICE

TOOLBAR TIP

KNOW YOUR TOOLBAR OPTIONS

The toolbar is obviously the place to go to help you design and build your Flash document. One greatly overlooked part of the toolbar is the set of options found below the tools. These options change for each tool and can really help you out in the construction process. If you want a rectangle with rounded corners, for example, click on the Rectangle tool and you'll see that the option shows a rounded corner. Clicking on this will open a pop-up menu allowing you to specify the radius of curve you wish to apply to the rectangle before drawing. In a similar way, many other tools here have options to give you more control.



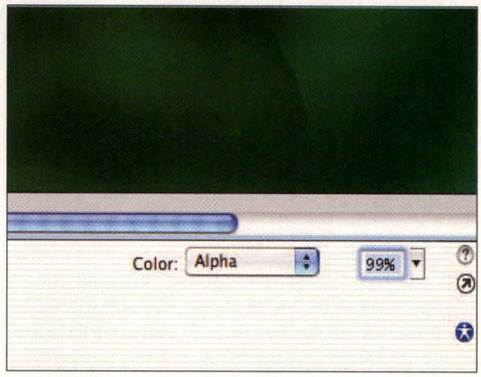
■ The extra options available for each tool can help you get the perfect effect you need

movie clip and drag your static button into it. Animate the button in any way you like, doing something like changing the colour or making the size of the button change slightly. Now create a new symbol in the library giving it the behaviour of a button, place the static graphic of your button on the Up state of the button and then create a blank keyframe at the Over state. This frame is where you place your animation. Press F5 on the Hit state to extend the timeline. Having done this, return to the main scene and place your button on the stage. Now you have a button which animates when the mouse moves over it. Follow the principles here, and you can quickly create the kind of stunning buttons you find on places such as the Apple Web site at **www.apple.com**.

ROCKING AND ROLLING

Q Sometimes the bitmap images I've brought in from Photoshop wobble around when I publish my completed Flash movie, ruining the whole effect. Do you know if there is any way I can try and stop this annoying glitch?

Neil Sache



■ Keep your images nice and steady (and perfectly visible as well) with a little bit of Alpha opacity tinkering

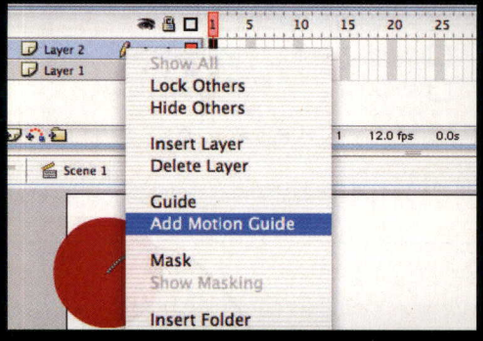
A Neil, this is indeed a very annoying glitch, but one that can be cured. Simply place the image inside a movie clip then place it on the stage, change the colour to Alpha and reduce the opacity to 99% in the Properties palette. The 1% reduction in opacity shouldn't affect the appearance of the image, but this trick will stop those annoying wobbles onscreen.

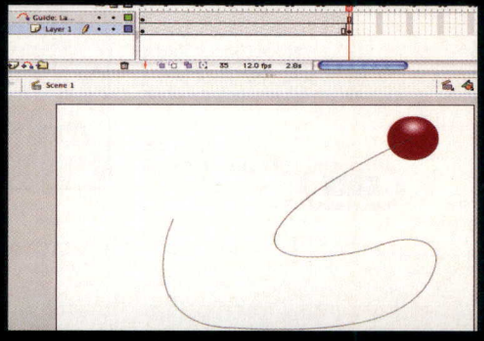
TECHNIQUE

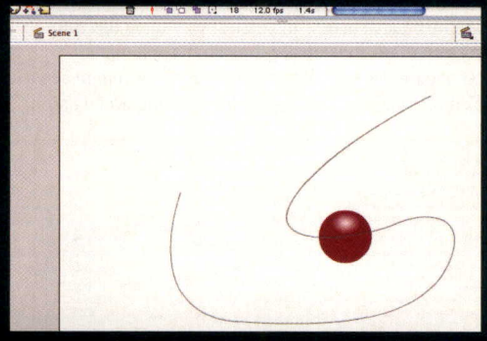
WORKING WITH ANIMATION PATHS

Creating animation to use on the Internet is one of Flash's strong points. It doesn't matter whether you're creating animation for a simple cartoon story or assembling your entire site interface on the screen from a variety of individual elements, Flash can pull this off with ease.

However, if you want to get a much more detailed animation path, it's probably a good idea to move away from simple keyframe animation with the repositioning of the graphic onscreen, and instead opt for using a motion guide option. Animation paths are lines drawn using the Line tool or the Pen tool. This is attached to the Graphic layer which gets keyframes added to it so the graphic knows where to be at the appropriate time. Once a motion tween is added to the Graphic layer, Flash fills in the frames in between based on the motion guide, completing your animation. See the guide below to see how it's done. ■







1 ADD A GRAPHIC

You need to start by placing a graphic from your library onto the stage, as you can only add motion tweens to library graphics. Once you've done this, right-click on the layer and from the drop-down menu, choose 'Add Motion Guide'. This will add a new layer directly over your existing layer (which is a guide).

2 ADD THE GUIDE

Use the Pen tool or the Line tool to add the animation path to the layer. Now add frames at frame 35 by selecting the frame and pressing F5 as this extends the timeline. Select the last frame of the graphic layer and press F6 to make this a keyframe, and move the graphic to the end of the motion guide.

3 CREATE A MOTION TWEEN

Select any frame between the two keyframes of the Graphic layer and add a motion tween from the Properties palette. If you hit Return on the keyboard you should see the graphic follow the path. If you add other keyframes at points along the path and move the graphic to these points, you can control the speed.

DREAMWEAVER

CHRIS SCHMIDT IS HERE TO HELP YOU WITH YOUR DREAMWEAVER WOES, SO IF YOU'VE GOT ANY WEB-WEAVING PROBLEMS, GET IN TOUCH

PHP PROBLEMS

Q I've been trying to expand my Dreamweaver skills by playing around with PHP content, but when I try to view my pages they don't seem to work. What's going on?

John Barrett

A PHP, like other dynamic languages such as ASP and JSP, can only be viewed properly when the required action determined by the code is carried out through a server. This means you can't actually test your files locally unless you have a Web server installed. Macs will have the Apache server in place that can be used, while Windows XP/2000 users can turn to Microsoft IIS (Internet Information Server) or PWS (Personal Web Server) for Windows 98.

If this seems overly complicated, the simplest option, assuming that you have hosting space available, is to upload your content before testing. Make sure your host supports PHP and hide the pages with temporary filenames while you're testing. Things should start to behave normally for you.

SEDUCED BY STYLE SHEETS

Q I've recently discovered the potential behind Cascading Style Sheets and want to transfer my current content over to the new method. Is there an easy way of doing this?

Andrew Jarvis

A Using CSS is certainly the way forward, and Macromedia would appear to agree with us considering the emphasis that Dreamweaver MX 2004 puts onto the method. The main problem when turning to CSS is the need to remove HTML formatting from the original pages. The easiest way to do this is to carry out a Find and Replace through the Edit menu.

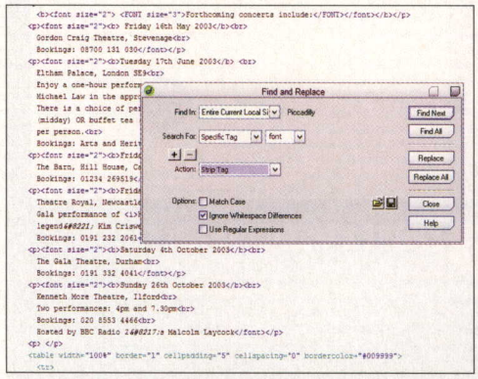
Configure this to search through the entire current site looking for the Font tag. Specify the Strip Tag action and hit the Replace All button. Initially the results might look devastating, but once you've created the basic style sheet and linked it to your pages, you'll find it much easier to have control over your site's formatting in future.

LINKED TO DISASTER

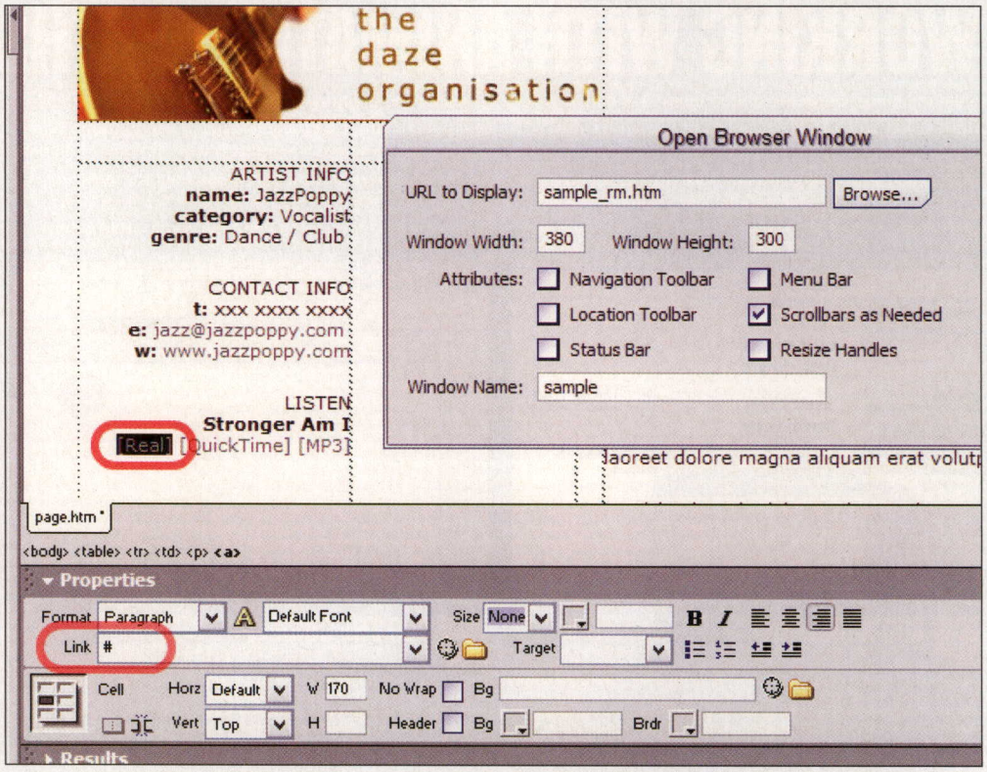
Q I'm having a few nightmares with creating links that generate pop-up windows. When I attach the behaviour to a link it works fine, but unfortunately it also updates the original page. How can I keep this from changing?

Tony Aldridge

A It sounds like you're setting the link location from the original link as well as associating a link behaviour. Select the text or image that will prompt the new page and enter a hash (#) symbol as the link location. You can now select this empty link and associate the Open Browser Window behaviour, using the dialog box that appears to enter the actual URL and window dimensions to complete the task. This way the base link has no effect on the original page, although the pop-up is generated through the associated behaviour.



Without CSS, you'd be relying on the outdated font tag which will require amending each and every instance



Associating the Open Browser Window behaviour with an empty link will apply the action and prevent the original page from refreshing

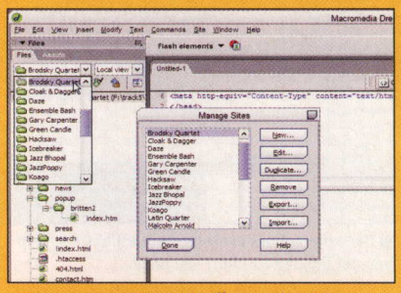
EXPERT ADVICE

UPGRADE TIPS

MOVING ON...

If, like many other designers who regularly use Dreamweaver, you find you have an ever-growing list of sites configured using Dreamweaver MX, you may be a little concerned about upgrading to the new version. There can be no doubt that all the new features sound fantastic, but you may have some nagging worries that you'll have to recreate the site definitions yet again. The good news is that you don't have to be concerned.

If you leave the previous MX version on your computer and install the new version, it will automatically place itself in a parallel directory to your original version and inherit any such settings. You can then remove the old version if you wish, safe in the knowledge that your settings have been transferred.



Dreamweaver MX 2004 will recognise site definitions already in place from previous versions if these are left installed

PHOTOSHOP

GET YOUR PHOTOSHOP SKILLS UP TO SCRATCH, THANKS TO GEORGE CAIRNS' EXCELLENT ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

ERASING BACKGROUNDS

Q I need to isolate content from Photoshop images to add to my Web page. What's the best way of going about this?

Ben Russell

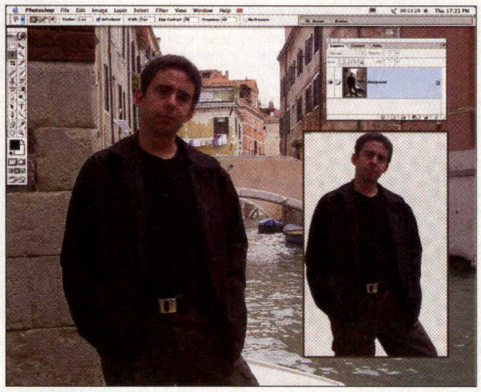
A There's many ways to skin a cat. Although that's not a particularly nice saying, it certainly applies to Photoshop. The software offers many different ways to cut an object out of an image. Both this question and the one that follows demonstrate two of the fastest ways of doing precisely this. If your object is shot against an even background – a building against a skyline for example – just whip out the Background Eraser tool. This nifty tool lives with the regular Erase tool in the toolbar. Set the Background Erase tool's Limits to Discontiguous so that it will erase all examples of the colour you want to remove. Set Sampling to Once so that it only erases the initial sampled colour (you can always take another sample later by clicking in a new colour.) Click on a pixel of the colour you want to erase and start brushing around the image. You'll see that the tool erases all the pixels containing the sampled colour but leaves the rest of the image untouched. This is a great way of isolating an object from its background. The Magic Eraser tool works in a similar way but is even faster. It wipes out great chunks of the sampled colour in one click.

CUT OUT AND KEEP!

Q How do I cut out objects from an image that are against a detailed background? No matter how hard I try, I just can't seem to get a good selection using the Magic Wand tool.

Bernice Cope

A Put down that Magic Wand Bernice, and try this terrific tool instead. Go to the toolbar and select the Magnetic Lasso tool. Unlike the bog-standard Lasso tool, this nifty relation lets you draw accurately around the edges of your chosen object. Click on a point by your object's outline to start the selection and then slowly follow the outline of the object you want to cut out. The Magnetic Lasso tool automatically creates a path which sticks to your object's outline like glue. You can edit the amount of anchor points that the tool will apply to the path by editing the Frequency box in the top menu. A setting of 40 should do the job. The anchor points defining the path are placed automatically but if the tool gets confused as to what it is selecting, you can click to place a point manually. If the tool gets confused by areas of similar contrast move the cursor back to the last anchor point and try following the outline again. You'll be amazed at how quickly you can use this tool to select a whole variety of objects against a variety of complex backgrounds.



Thanks to the power of Photohsop 7's Magnetic Lasso tool, you can quickly cut out an object from a background

TECHNIQUE

REMOVE UNWANTED PICTURE ELEMENTS

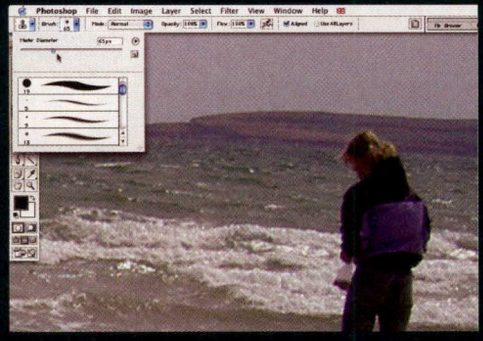
Q I've got a Web site that I want to add a bit of life to by creating a nice abstract background. After searching through my old photos, I've found an excellent one, but it's marred by a person in the background. How can I get rid of them?

Derrick May

A Never fear Derrick, Photoshop eats this type of job for breakfast. We need to replace the pixels representing the unwanted individual with adjacent 'clean' pixels. Our chosen tool for the job is the Clone Stamp tool. To illustrate this tool in action, we nipped down to Bournemouth's award-winning beach to recreate the problem shot (any opportunity for a day out of the office!). The Clone Stamp tool takes practice to master but once you've got the hang of it, reality doesn't stand a chance. There's virtually nothing you can't remove from a shot. Here's the solution to Derrick's question in a handy three-step walkthrough.

1 SELECT THE CLONE STAMP TOOL

Here's the original shot in all its glory. We could just crop it to lose the unwanted girl but that would be cheating (and make for a very short walkthrough!). Click on the Clone Stamp tool in the toolbar (or press S if you fancy a faster keyboard shortcut).



2 CHOOSE A BRUSH SIZE

To be more effective, zoom in on the area you need to work on. Select a soft-edged brush from the Brush preset picker at the top of the screen. The soft edge will help the Clone tool to work more subtly when it replaces existing pixels with adjacent ones.

3 CLONE OUT THE CHARACTER

Hold down the Alt (or option) key and click to sample an area adjacent to the girl. The Clone Stamp sucks up pixels from the sampled area and deposits them on the area you spray the brush on. You'll need to take several samples to totally obscure the unwanted person.

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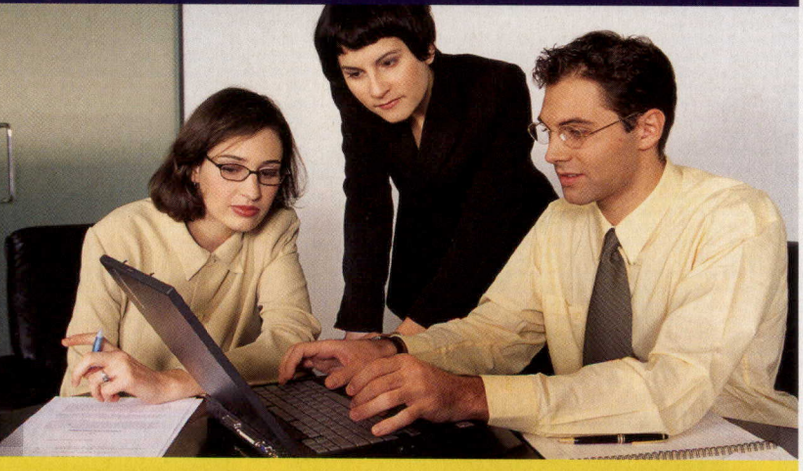

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DEVELOPER

CODE AND SCRIPT CAN BE DIFFICULT BEDFELLOWS, BUT WITH PHILIP BENNISON ON YOUR SIDE, YOU CAN BEND THEM TO YOUR WILL

A BEGINNER'S WOE

Q I'm pretty new to this whole Web development thing, and am still trying to get to grips with it. I've pretty much got the hang of HTML, but I'm stuck on a couple of points.

I've heard that it's possible to place something exactly where you want it on a Web page, but I'm somewhat stuck as to how to achieve this. Could you offer me any advice on this?

Samantha Grimes

A You're probably referring to positioning elements using style sheets. Anyone involved in code will know how difficult it is to get things to stay where you want them when you're coding HTML. Even if you manage to get it right in one browser, it's likely to be somewhere completely different.

Style sheets can solve all of these problems by allowing you to position elements exactly where you want them, using the position:absolute attribute. This works in the following way:

```
.mystyle { position:absolute; left:100; top:200; }
```

This sets the position of mystyle to 100 to the left and 200 from the top of the top left-hand corner of the screen. You place the element you want to position in a or tag.

USED AND ABUSED

Q I've been coding ASP for the past couple of months, and have been trying to create a 'user list'. I've heard this is possible using session cookies, but I've not been able to get my head around the concept.

Jack Sandy

A It's highly likely that you're thinking of using the application object. It's possible to use this within ASP in order to create overall application variables. You can use these to store details that are accessible from the application as a whole.

Application level functions are stored in the global.asp file, which should be found at the root of your Web site. From here you can create functions that will run when the application starts and finishes. In this file you will also find various session functions that run when a session starts and finishes.

Use the session functions to add and remove users from an application level array variable, and access this variable whenever you want to get a list of users. ■

■ **Confused by coding? Angered by ASP? Pop along to the ASP Resource Index at www.aspin.com for salvation**

TECHNIQUE

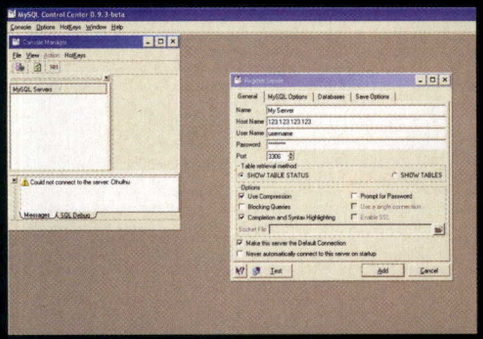
DIG DOWN TO THE DATABASE

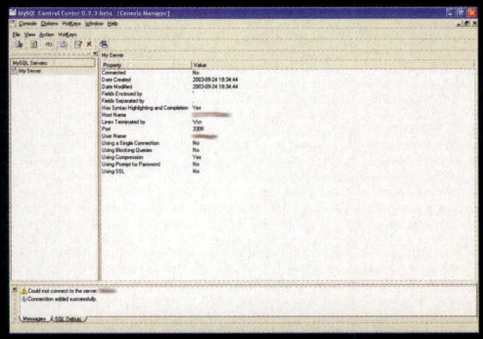
Q Hello, I wonder if you can help me with my problem. I've recently purchased a hosting package together with an MySQL database on its server. Although I'm not a complete beginner, most of my coding has been done on my own computer, and now that I'm coding for the Internet, I'm somewhat dazed and confused.

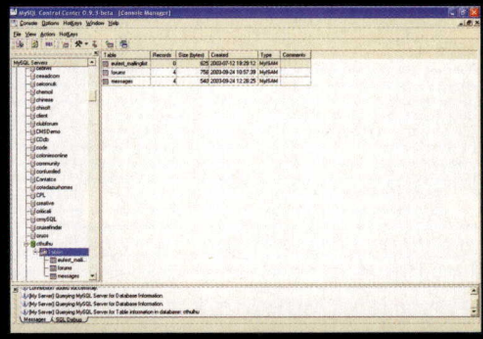
How do I access the database in order to create tables, insert information, and so on and so forth? I've had a bit of a think about it all and I've really no idea where to begin. If you could help, it'd be appreciated.

Tom MacDonald

A In order to access the database on your host's server, you'll need to use some sort of special client. There are a number of options, but one of the better (and free) options is MySQL Control Center. You can download this for free from the MySQL site (**www.mysql.com**). See below for an idea of how it all works.







1 YOUR INFORMATION

When you start MySQL Control Center for the first time, you'll be presented with the Register Server window. Enter the relevant information, which you should have received this when you purchased the MySQL database. If you haven't, contact your host.

2 CONNECT TO THE SERVER

Once you click Add, the server will be added to the MySQL Control Center list of servers. To connect, right-click on the server you wish to connect to, and click Connect. You'll then be able to open up a list of databases on that server. Search through the list until you find yours.

3 PERFORM YOUR COMMAND

Connect to this database by right-clicking and clicking Connect. You'll be shown a list of tables (if you have any). To create a new table, right-click on Tables and click New Table. Alternatively, select the SQL icon, and enter pure SQL in order to create, manipulate, update, or delete tables and data.

MAKEOVER

SITE SOS

CHRIS SCHMIDT TAKES A LOOK AT THE SITE EVERYDAY-TAICHI.COM TO SEE HOW THE DESIGN AND NAVIGATION MIGHT BENEFIT FROM ADDING A TOUCH MORE STYLE...

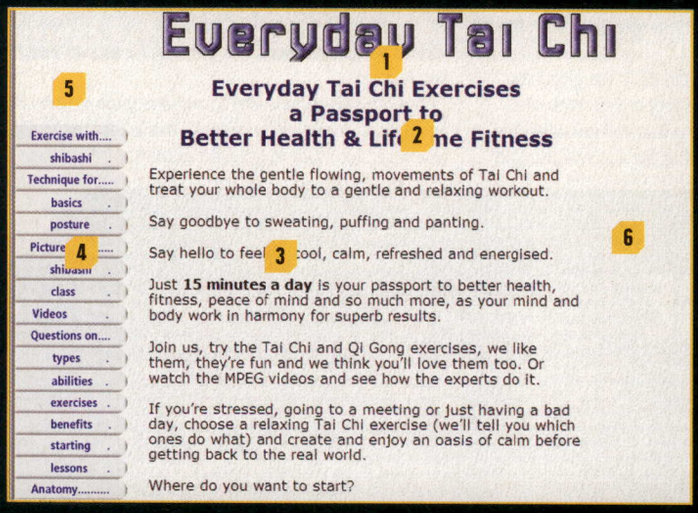
Everyday-taichi.com is a great site that provides comprehensive information about Tai Chi through a series of informative pages that have been well thought-out and logically divided.

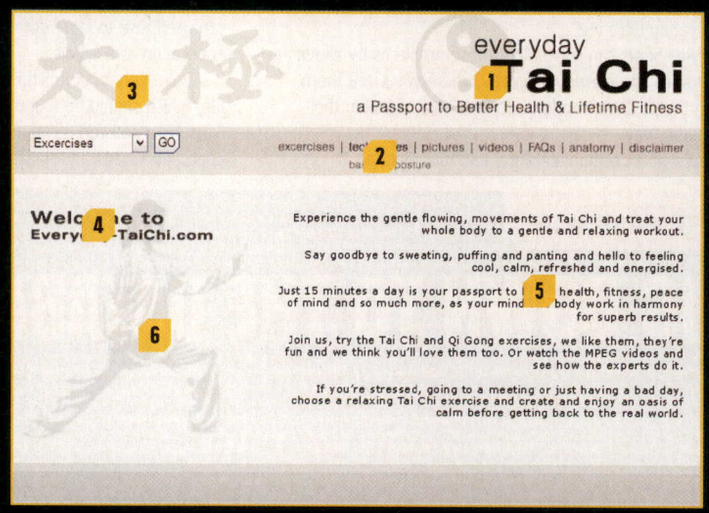
However, as is the case with most people who have a life away from the computer and aren't constantly monitoring their site, there are elements that could do with updating. It quickly becomes clear that the owner is no Web designer, and although the range of content is fantastic and the site structure sound, there are a few little tweaks that could really help mould the site into something special.

The first thing you notice is the abundance of text. This is great for putting the message across, but requires a fair bit of reading before the purpose of the site is established. What better way to enlighten someone who hasn't a clue what Tai Chi is all about, than by including a few images to illustrate the point? Similarly, adapting the design to suit the tranquil nature of the subject will also help to establish the feel of the site.

The site structure is good, although having the navigation sub-categories visible in a long list can also detract from the core content. Bearing in mind the short attention span of most people, we considered alternative methods of providing an overview of the site, with easy access to specific pages.

The final result provides a basic home page layout and can be easily adapted to suit subsequent pages. The client must make the final decision, but hopefully our new version will provide some food for thought. ■





1 The site name graphic inherently brands the site as it passes through subsequent pages to become a familiar feature. The original title does the trick but lacks any kind of relationship with the site content. The font is also a little dated, as is the bevel effect, although it is clearly recognisable and manages to remain legible.

2 The strap line changes into the title for subsequent pages. Currently this helps to establish the colour scheme set by the title and navigation, but the size and content are made a little too long by repeating the site name. By aligning this to the centre the gravity of the page becomes confused, as it clashes with the main body text.

3 The text content intro provides a great overview of the site, although the large font size means a little vertical scrolling is necessary. The page continues to provide summaries of each of the site sections, which is a great idea in principle but simply becomes too lengthy to read.

4 The navigation and site structure are well thought-out with clear categories and sub-categories. However, listing everything in such a manner detracts from the core content and an overview of the primary areas quickly becomes lost. The bright yellow CSS rollover helps to establish the selection, but is inconsistent with the site colours.

5 The background doesn't really add much to the look or feel of the site, and only makes things look even more dated. Replacing this with a solid colour background would be the quickest way of improving the site. Even a subtle horizontal gradient over the navigation area would make a dramatic difference.

6 Images are noticeable by their absence. Don't expect everyone to be familiar with your subject. By placing a few illustrative graphics you not only add a little interest to the layout, but also help set the mood and feel, explain the site's primary purpose and break the text so the content isn't quite so unrelenting.

1 The site branding has been updated to place emphasis on the subject matter. A little graphical interest has also been added to reinforce the 'feel' and a strap line included to provide some indication of the site's purpose. This combination should establish the site subject almost instantly.

2 The primary navigation has been revised so that only the primary categories are immediately available. Sub-categories could be revealed below on rollover, as we've illustrated here with the Techniques section. The drop-down Jump To menu could provide the original overview with immediate access to any page.

3 The general design has been muted to reflect the peaceful nature of the Tai Chi art, using subtle tones and illustrations that support the mood and feel and help to establish the content further. Muting the colours in such a way also helps to draw the eye to a page's primary content, as there's nothing to divert attention.

4 The title moves into the body of the page to improve the association it has with the main copy. As the layout is for the home page, this can be a simple welcome greeting, although on subsequent pages it would be replaced with some text to indicate the content of that page.

5 The text content has been reduced to just the introduction, and uses a smaller font size to keep everything visible without scrolling. We've changed the font to Verdana, which is a Web-safe font that renders well at smaller sizes without losing clarity, although the black against white also helps to keep the contrast legible.

6 Muted images have been used to support the message and design of the site. The posing figure combined with the symbol in the header and the Chinese text help to establish the site's purpose to anyone unfamiliar with the subject. However, illustrative graphics could be placed more clearly within the body of the text.

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ON TEST

OUR RATING SYSTEM

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Features

Does the product have enough functionality to make it worthwhile? Has the manufacturer thrown in features to blind you with science? We explain here.

Ease of use

Here, you'll discover if a product can be picked up and used straight out of the box easily. It's not all about being beginner-friendly, though, and we're looking for intuitiveness and an easy path to impressive results.

Quality of results

A product may be easy to operate, but does it provide you with the results you want to achieve? This category often tells you most about a product, as results are what ultimately determines its success or not.

Value for money

Does the product's feature range merit its price tag? Are you paying over the odds for a one-trick pony, or will the product prove a valuable addition to your toolkit?

Final score

Every product we review is given a final percentage as a summary of its overall performance. Look for scores about 85% for a top class piece of software or hardware.

Products which receive 90% or more are given the coveted *Practical Internet Web Designer* award. Only the most outstanding products are awarded a score in the nineties, and this rating marks that product as 'must-have'.

ON TEST THIS MONTH

Flash MX Professional 2004 118
Extend your use of Flash with this new developer-friendly version of the ubiquitous animation tool

Wacom Graphire 3 Studio XL 120
Get yourself a piece of graphics tablet action for a fraction of the price you'd pay elsewhere

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Build yourself impressive eCommerce and business stores quickly and easily with the latest version of Fusion

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Take better digital photographs with Nikon's high quality 5-megapixel snapper

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Canon Canoscan LiDE 80 127
Convert photos, illustrations and more into digital artwork with this fully-featured scanner

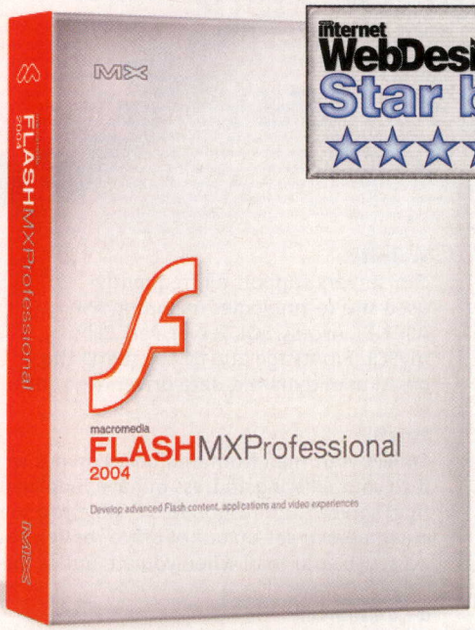
Book reviews 128
Check out which Web design tomes you should be reading during the cold winter months

FLASH MX PROFESSIONAL 2004

WITH A WEALTH OF NEW FEATURES AND A HEFTY PRICE TAG, DOES THE NEW DEVELOPER VERSION OF FLASH PASS THE TEST?

Any designer worth their salt has used Flash, whether it's to create a simple animation or to generate entire sites. In fact, Flash has become the pervasive Web design technology, used by both graphics experts and serious hand-coders alike. But what started out as a simple vector animation tool has gradually incorporated more and more high-end development functionality. Designers may be happy with this arrangement, but your average developer will steer clear of some of the program's features.

Macromedia's solution to this lies with the launch of the new Studio MX 2004 suite, which sees Flash split in two. Flash MX 2004 is a pure and simple upgrade to its predecessor, with a few nifty add-ons. Professional, however, is a whole different kettle of fish. In short, it's aimed at the developers out there – people who want to create dynamic applications in Flash, but who have never quite been able to figure out how that timeline relates to what they're doing.



Wide screen

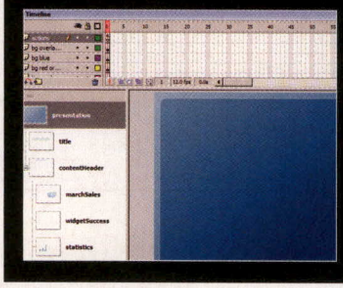
The main thing you'll notice when booting up Flash MX Professional is that it's pretty much the same as Flash MX – in fact, the two programs share the same installation, and you merely choose which one to activate. There's a major difference to the interface, though. Whereas the timeline has always been at the core of any Flash functionality, Professional has a new frames-based panel which shows you the 'screens' you've created in your project. Director fans will recognise this straight away, and it's this section which lets you discard the timeline in favour of more developer-friendly progression. Think about it: you create an intro screen which contains a small animation and a button to link to the next page. With the timeline, it's not entirely natural which frame to move to, but with the screens method, it's a doddle.

There's no way we could overstate the importance of this function. For the first time ever, you can turn off the timeline completely and still create impressive,

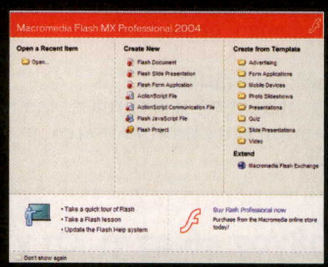
SPECIFICATIONS

Product:	Flash MX Professional 2004
Operating systems:	PC, OS X
System requirements:	PC
	600MHz Intel PIII processor or equivalent. Windows 98SE, 2000 or XP. 128 Mb RAM (256Mb recommended). 275Mb available disk space
System requirements:	MAC
	500MHz PowerPC G3 processor Mac OS X 10.2.6. 128Mb RAM (256Mb recommended). 215Mb available disk space

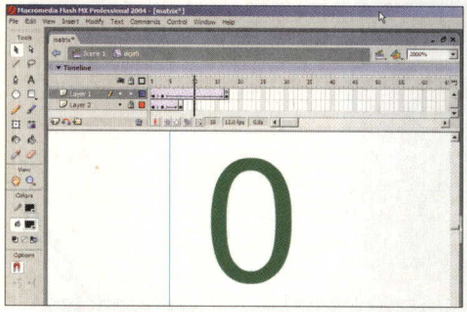
IN DETAIL: UNDER THE BONNET OF FLASH MX PROFESSIONAL 2004



Professional allows you to view your work in terms of 'screens', each page signifying a specific section of your application or slideshow. It works well for some functions, but not so great for others.



Each program in the MX 2004 range now sports a helpful and user-friendly welcome screen. Offering a range of recently-used files and standard templates, this could make your life a lot easier.

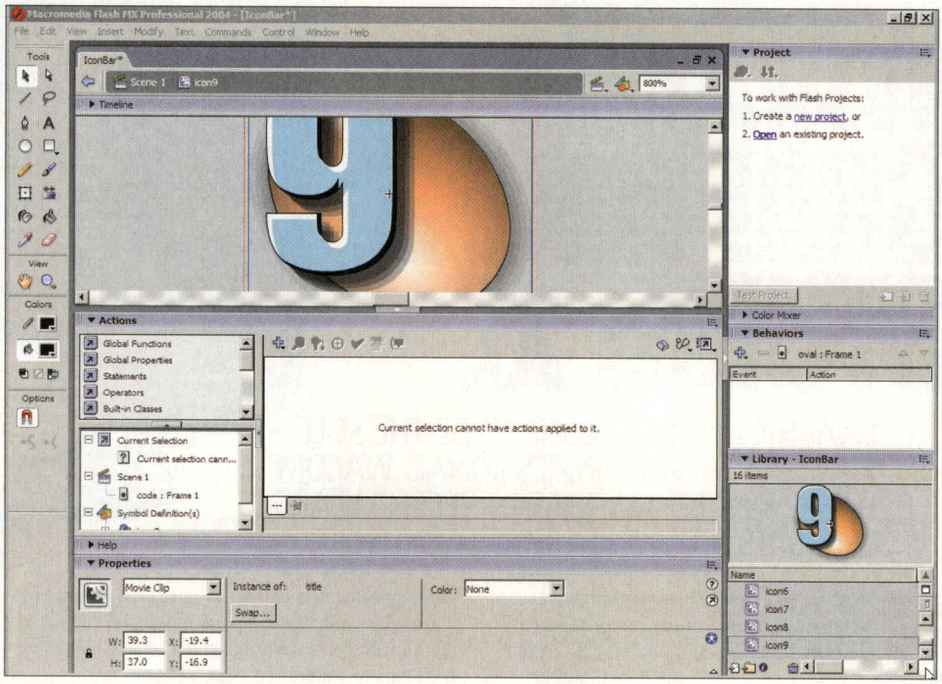


■ You can turn the timeline on and off, depending on what best suits the needs of the file you're currently working on

interactive Flash files. Designers can still use the timeline whenever they want, but the added functionality of the screens panel makes a world of difference. Ally these to the Flash templates, which give you the basic tools needed to create presentations and slideshows, and you're looking at a quick and easy way to create high-end interactive apps.

Video star

Flash MX's new big brother isn't just about a newly-designed interface, though, and there's plenty to discover under the hood. One of the most significant



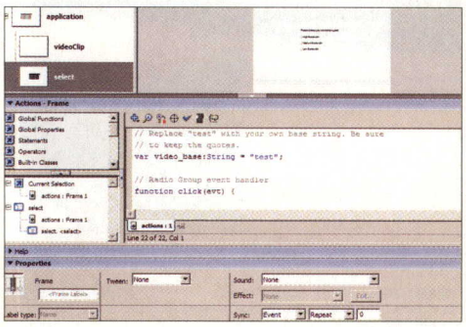
■ Flash MX Professional 2004 affords you new levels of control over the way you build complex Flash movies

"FLASH PROFESSIONAL IS AIMED AT DEVELOPERS WHO WANT TO CREATE DYNAMIC APPLICATIONS IN FLASH, BUT WHO HAVE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO FIGURE OUT THE TIMELINE"

updates involve video, a concept first introduced in Flash MX. In Professional, you can forget about file size limitations, but much more importantly, you can now stream video in Flash. Anyone who used video in Flash MX will appreciate the difference this makes – you no longer need to load up the whole Flash movie before people can start watching. Improved encoding mixed with the overall improvement to the Flash Player's video-handling, gives you the ability to embed extremely high quality videos in your Flash files. The new package also allows you to work with a variety of industry-leading video-editing packages.

Elsewhere, there are a wealth of other impressive tools to keep high-end users happy. The ActionScript engine has been updated to version 2.0, which now sports far more compatibility with Web applications. Group workers should also be cheered by the inclusion of Sourcesafe, the kind of check in/out facility that Dreamweaver has sported for years, but which Flash now embraces for the first time.

The decision for anyone on whether to buy Flash MX 2004 or its professional sibling isn't an easy one, especially with £180 difference between the pair. If you long to create applications or presentations, then Professional is your saviour. If you're still undecided, just remember that Professional has every one of the features of its compadre, but with a distinct feature set of its own thrown in as well. ■



■ Even the ActionScript panel has been altered slightly in Flash Professional to take the new features into account

VERDICT

Product: Flash MX Professional 2004
Price [inc VAT]: £579
Telephone: 01344 458 600
URL: www.macromedia.com/uk

Features

■ The original Flash MX feature set was impressive, but this blows it out of the water

Ease of use

■ Beginners will struggle, but users confused by the timeline will suddenly find Flash a whole lot easier

Quality of results

■ Let's face it, there's nothing like Flash for creating animations and sites that take people's breath away

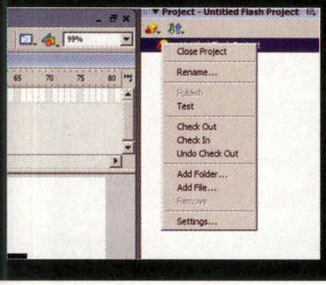
Value for money

■ This isn't cheap, but then again, Professional does take Flash to a whole new level

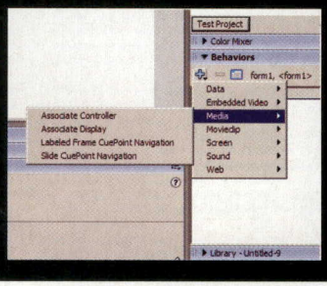
SUMMARY

■ Until now, developers have had to work using an esoteric timeline system that didn't lend itself too kindly to the task. Flash MX 2004 Professional makes sure that everyone who wants to gain impressive results can do so. In short, it could be the most complete Web design package around.

FINAL SCORE: 94%



■ The 'check-in' feature allows a team to work on the same document on the server. Each person checks in and out of the document, ensuring that only one individual can work on the file at any one time.



■ Behaviours finally get their day in Flash. Basically, they give you a wealth of developer-friendly power, without any of the coding hassles usually associated with it.

WACOM GRAPHIRE 3 STUDIO XL

GRAPHICS TABLETS USED TO BE THE SOLE PRESERVE OF THE PROFESSIONAL. WACOM HAS CHANGED ALL THAT IN RECENT YEARS, BUT IS ITS STUDIO XL UP TO SCRATCH?

Talk to any graphic designer or indeed anyone who would class themselves as a Photoshop power user, and they'll tell you that their mouse is okay, but they'd love to find something more intuitive with which to create their graphical masterpieces. Let's face it, mice are great for pointing to menus and double-clicking on icons, but attempting to draw with them is a different matter.

Wacom has quietly established a niche market in the past few years, offering designers a way out of mouse misery via their impressive tablet pads. The concept is frighteningly simple: you get something that can only be described as the plastic equivalent of a sketchpad, which is controlled via the supplied pen. You can use the pen in exactly the same way you would a mouse, and the addition of a handy duo-switch button enables you to mimic all manner of mouse clicks.

In the studio

We tested the top of the range model in Wacom's third generation of Graphire tablets. The first thing anyone should spot with the Graphire range is its price – professional tablets will set you back thousands, but Wacom lets you savour a piece of the pen-controlled pie for less than a darts maximum score. Considering the range of features on offer, this price is astonishing, and represents nothing less than an undisputed bargain.

Once you've stopped marvelling at the price, you can take the tablet out of its box. The A5 dimensions may pale into comparison with the giants you see elsewhere, but there is still plenty of room to manoeuvre around even the most complex of images with ease. Prepare to invest time and effort into the tablet, though, as it'll take you hours of use to perfect the device.

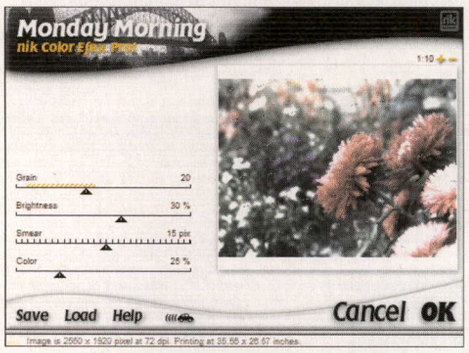
When you've found your feet, you'll ask yourself how you ever managed to design without it. Open up one of the four built-in software packages bundled with the hardware, and you'll suddenly realise why these tablets are such a good thing. The Graphire 3 Studio XL comes equipped with some 512 levels of pressure sensitivity, which means that the harder you press, the thicker the line you draw. In essence, it's like picking up a pencil for the first time, such is the level of control that this input method allows you.

Control freak

Another of the pen's advantages over many of its cheese-eating counterparts is that it's both cordless and batteryless, making extravagant artistic flourishes all the easier. The pen also comes with a handy customisable Eraser tool to enable you to rub away your efforts, again with pressure sensitivity helping you achieve subtle and impressive results.

The mouse isn't entirely consigned to the wastebasket, though, and you'll find a cordless, batteryless, ball-less rodent in the Studio XL pack. The seemingly magical trick of a cordless and batteryless mouse is achieved by the simple fact that the mouse uses exactly the same technology as the pen – move the mouse over the tablet to make the cursor onscreen change position. Add in a set of three programmable buttons, and you're looking at a fairly decent mouse as a bundled bonus.

Talking of bonuses, you really should check out the software supplied with the tablet. You might

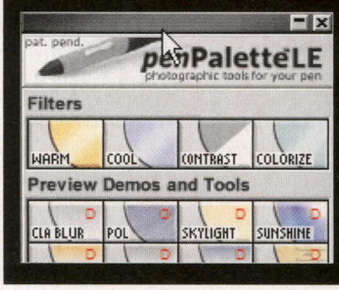


■ The PenPalette options gives you a wealth of new plug-ins which you can fine-tune thanks to the built-in settings

SPECIFICATIONS

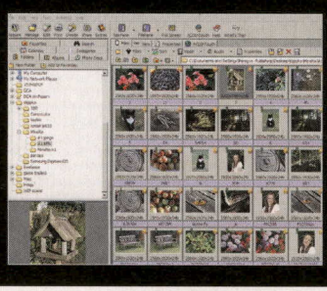
Product:	Wacom Graphire 3 Studio XL
Specifications:	PC, Mac
Tablet Dimensions:	275.5 x 256.8 x 18.1 mm
Active area:	208.8 x 150.8 mm
Pressure levels:	512
Resolution:	2,032 lpi
Maximum reading height:	5mm
Interface:	USB

IN DETAIL: WHAT STUDIO XL HAS TO OFFER



■ The PenPalette plug-in bolts perfectly onto Photoshop and Photoshop Elements to give you even more filters, and a degree of control over how you use them that you just won't get anywhere else.

■ Many of us have reams of digital video gathering virtual dust on our hard drives. This app lets you create fully functional DVD movies, with a wide range of special effects. Even beginners can expect decent results in no time.



■ As you slowly build up your personal artwork portfolio, you'll soon find you need something to keep your images in order. ACDSee 5.0 enables you to catalogue and organise ranges of images, in a variety of formats.

Inside the Studio XL package

Find out what goes where in the Wacom Graphire 3 Studio XL package by checking out our simple annotated diagram below

Active area
This is the section of the tablet that is sensitive to the movements of the supplied tools. You can actually place a transparent cover over this to trace images more easily

Customisable buttons
The mouse not only has no ball, cord or batteries, but you can also configure each of the three buttons to perform any function you choose

Wireless
Both the pen and mouse are both completely wireless, ensuring that you don't get tangled up in cords as you create your next Web masterpiece

Pen tip
The tip of the pen works in conjunction with the 512 levels of sensitivity built into the tablet to give you more control over the thickness of the line that you draw

Duo switch
This adjustable button acts like both the left and right buttons on a mouse, although you can configure this switch in a number of ways

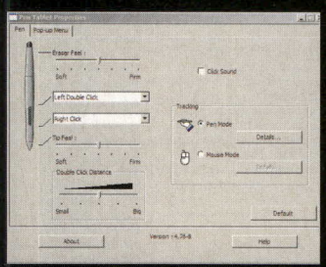
Eraser
Turn the pen upside down and you'll be able to remove areas of your image with the same pressure sensitivity as if you were drawing

"THE GRAPHIRE 3 REPRESENTS EXCELLENT VALUE FOR MONEY, OFFERING A GLIMPSE AT THE KIND OF TOOLS THAT ONLY HIGH-END PROFESSIONALS WOULD HAVE USED A FEW YEARS AGO"

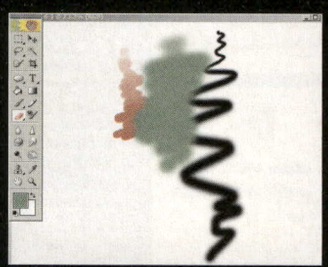
expect the standard drivers and maybe a budget graphics tool, but Wacom has really pulled out all the stops with a collection of four genuinely useful applications. Top of the tree is undoubtedly Photoshop Elements 2, Adobe's entry-level graphics editor. This is probably the finest budget graphics package around, and its inclusion is a fine addition to any collection.

Elements is bolstered by penPalette LE, a plug-in that configures the program to work perfectly with the tablet/pen combination. Pinnacle Studio 8 SE is a video-editing tool designed to make the process as simple as possible, while ACDSee will enable you to view digital images in over 50 formats through its intuitive interface.

All in all, the Graphire 3 Studio XL represents excellent value for money, offering a glimpse at the kind of tools that only high-end professionals would have dreamed of using a few years ago. What's more, the range of software supplied with the package is so impressive that you wouldn't need to shell out on graphics software for many a year. ■



■ Install the tablet's drivers on your machine, and you'll see a wealth of customisation options to help you get the most from your pen. You can tweak every aspect of the tablet, from sensitivity through to button configuration.



■ Unlike a standard mouse, the pen lets you adjust the lines you draw by pressing harder or softer. This creates not only a far more intuitive atmosphere, but also leads to more impressive artwork.

VERDICT

Product: Wacom Graphire 3 Studio XL
Price [inc VAT]: £179.99
Email: info@wacom-europe.com
URL: www.wacom-europe.com

Features
■ The pen/mouse/tablet combination is great, but the cracking software makes this incredibly alluring

Ease of use
■ It takes a while to control the onscreen cursor with a pen, but you'll get amazing results when you do!

Quality of results
■ The pressure-sensitive tablet lets you draw as if using pencil on paper, giving a huge leap in quality

Value for money
■ Offers a brilliant combination of software and hardware for an impressively low price. A bargain

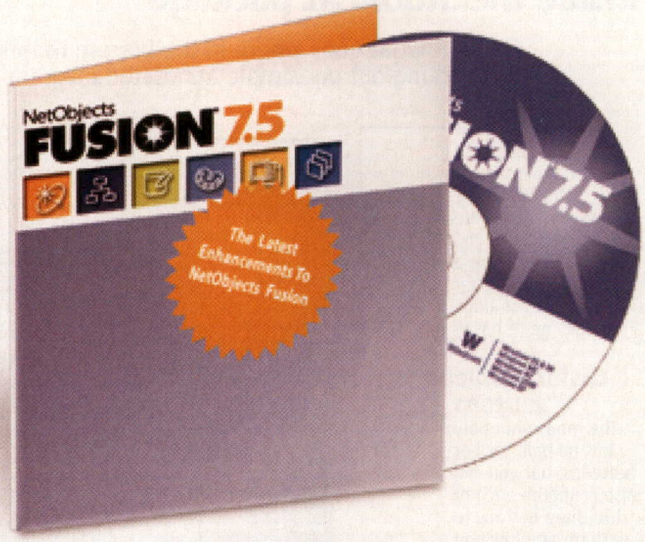
SUMMARY

■ Graphics tablets used to be the sole preserve of the full-time digital artist, but Wacom has taken major strides in recent years to rectify this. The Wacom Graphire 3 Studio XL is a great investment for Web designers, offering the functionality of a tablet for a fraction of the price.

FINAL SCORE: 84%

NETOBJECTS FUSION 7.5

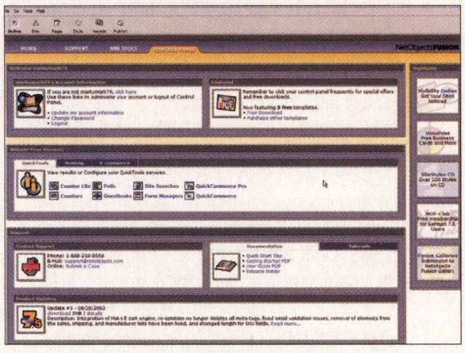
BUILDING IMPRESSIVE WEB SITES HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER THAN WITH THIS BEGINNER-FRIENDLY UPDATE TO THE HERALDED FUSION RANGE



It could be said that the relative lack of many maverick dotcom successes may be attributed to a general lack of technical ability. Perhaps some potentially fruitful ideas have fallen by the wayside because the brains behind them were just bewildered by site design. We were possibly all guilty of harbouring optimistic schemes for striking it rich during the Web boom, but there's no reason why small businesses can't still benefit. Luckily, the perceived horror surrounding the creation of professional quality domains and even eCommerce facilities has been dispelled by new consumer packages. For those unfamiliar with the series, NetObjects Fusion 7.5 is the latest tool that claims to cover all this and more. Eschewing the higher-end development market, Fusion builds on its reputation of catering for those users with limited HTML knowledge. Support is there for those who want it and budding coders can get their hands dirty to an extent, but the convenience of drag and drop is largely preferred.

SPECIFICATIONS

Product:	NetObjects Fusion 7.5
Web address:	www.netobjects.co.uk
Format:	Upgrade and full versions available on CD or download
System Requirements:	Windows 98 – XP
	64Mb RAM
	250Mb Disk space, 60Mb Free
	56Kb Internet connection



The Web-based Control Panel allows you to set up various advanced functions for your site with the click of a button

Shop until you drop

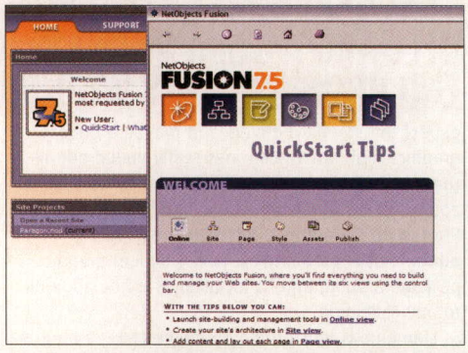
The integration of shopping facilities like PayPal is one of the key advantages of Fusion. Joined by extra services QuickCommerce and Kurant's StoreSense, this is an area that will certainly appeal to hopeful online sellers. Each provides a user-friendly solution for setting up shopping carts and securely accepting customer orders, whether via encrypted email or the direct acceptance of credit card payments.

What's more, the initial production of a viable product catalogue is almost suspiciously effortless in its execution, and this is where Fusion really excels. New users can quickly gain confidence in knocking together sites of varying complexity in no time. For a start, the interface makes life considerably easier due to its familiar browser-style design. A special Online view houses a pastel-shaded collection of tabbed panels that can be used to quickly archive past projects or gain support and tools. In addition, a Control Panel section lets you subscribe to hosting services or use the aforementioned eCommerce options.

What's nice visually is that everything is kept within a defined theme and the chunky rendering of screen elements maintains accessibility. The main page-building tools are similarly grouped together and cleverly arranged along the main toolbar in a way that suggests a logical process. Site provides a workspace for creating page objects diagrammatically within a tree-like structure, where blank pages are quickly added and valid links created automatically. A handy floating Properties box also lets you change basic characteristics such as name, title and meta data, before editing the page properly.

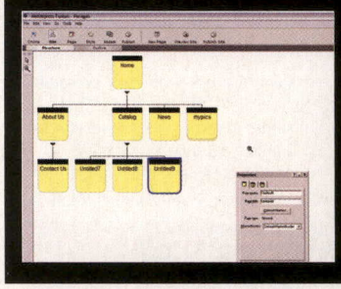
Part of the process

Clicking Page opens each default template in the style chosen when first creating the site. This means that standard elements like text, buttons and banners all adhere to one of many colour schemes, ready for you to customise. Cleverly, the editing area has been made highly intuitive – to a point where you could almost forget that you're dealing with HTML. A grid overlay is applied to help in positioning tables, images, text areas and all manner of objects, while sizing the page is brilliantly handled by vertical and horizontal rulers.

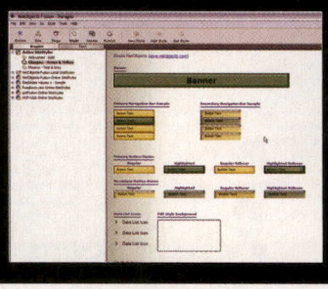


The support section within the Fusion 7.5 interface should provide enough information to get you started instantly

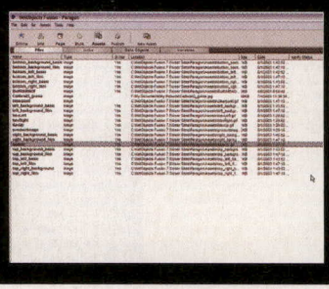
IN DETAIL: SEE YOUR SITE DEVELOPING BEFORE YOUR EYES



The Site Viewer presents your developing site graphically, using a tree diagram to represent links. Pages are shown in yellow and new ones can be quickly added to the hierarchy.



Viewing the Styles section enables you to know which of the available schemes is being applied. You can also preview alternatives or even add your own creations for use.



A Web site isn't just a collection of pages. You will probably have stacks of external resources such as images and Flash clips to keep track of, and Fusion lets you do just that.

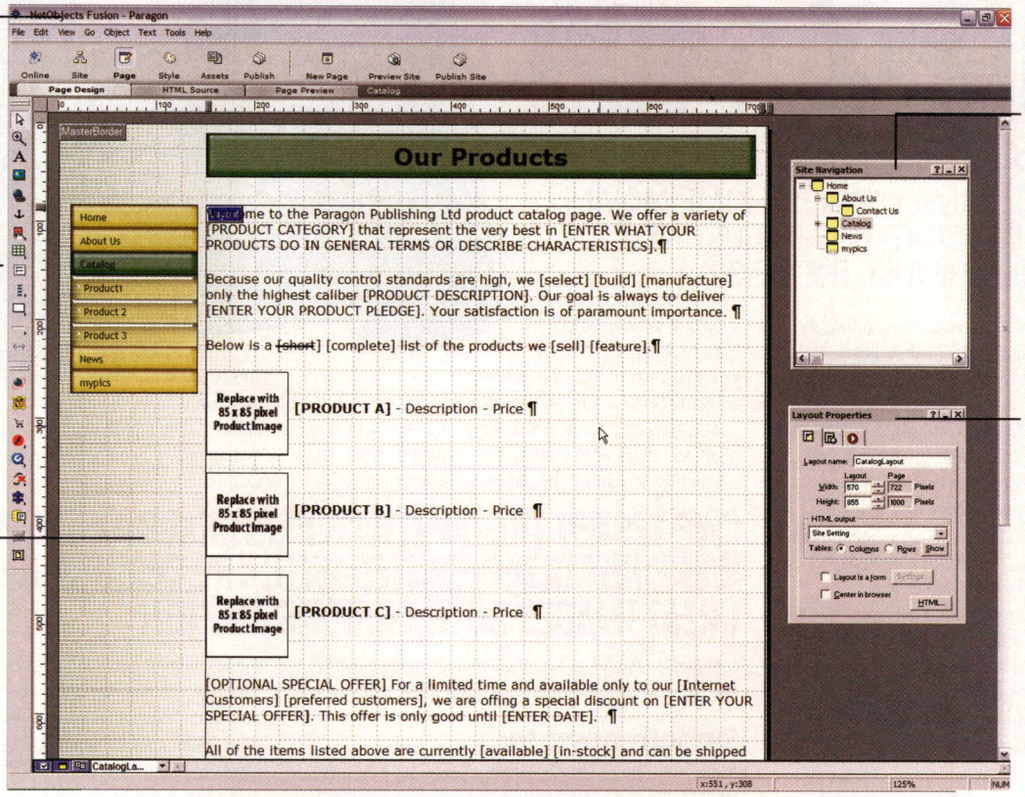
NetObjects Fusion 7.5 in detail

We give you the lowdown on Fusion's Site Design window by highlighting some of the key interface features

Main dashboard
This is where you gain access to each development section. Additional buttons will appear according to which section you are currently working in

Tools panel
Here you'll find all the tools you should need when editing your pages. Everything from standard elements like tables and links to Flash plug-ins or data controls is available

Document space
Your page template appears here for you to manipulate freely. Elements can be moved around or edited directly, while new objects are simply drawn onto the grid area



Site Navigation box
The sitemap and structure defined in the Site Viewer is also displayed here. This helps you keep track of how things are being built and gives rapid access to all pages

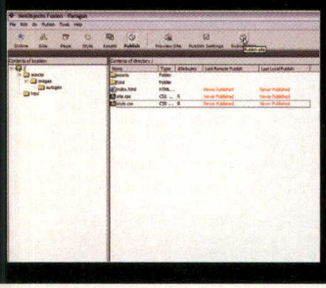
Properties box
Each element has definable properties such as size and caption. If you wish to tweak these settings more directly you can enter raw values into this floating set of tabbed boxes

"CLEVERLY, THE EDITING AREA HAS BEEN MADE HIGHLY INTUITIVE – TO A POINT WHERE YOU COULD ALMOST FORGET THAT YOU'RE DEALING WITH HTML..."

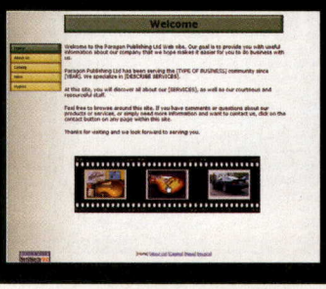
Tailoring content is equally simple, with the changing of text or labels typically handled by double-clicking. With the Styles section you can also go a stage further and switch standard schemes until happy, or use a paint program for more comprehensive work. This is a nice touch, because although the supplied looks will appear sufficiently professional for most, many will wish to pursue a more personalised feel.

Another area worth noting is the package's facilities for adding photo galleries. This feature seems to be a real selling point for the software and should get users compiling flashy albums of snaps in no time. By clicking Insert Photo Gallery, you can locate multiple images and arrange them in a suitable grid. You can then select from a series of decorative surrounds and frames, including an imitation strip of film, with each thumbnail instantly linked to a larger version.

Once happy with your work, Fusion has all you'll need to finally upload your site with a Publish area that apes most FTP clients. Notably, there's also an Assets pane that enables you to keep tabs on all the files or Flash, Quick Time or ActiveX plug-ins it lets you add. ■



When you come to publish, you'll see another breakdown of all the files within your site in an Explorer-style view. The software will also inform you of what has been published previously.



With a simple click of a button, Fusion will provide a preview of your finished site. You should also find that the package has been optimised to effectively offer cross-browser support.

VERDICT

Product: NetObjects Fusion 7.5
Price [inc VAT]: £139.95 (full version)
Telephone: 023 8081 7700
URL: www.netobjects.co.uk

Features
■ Gives you everything you'd need to structure, design and publish your site in a logical format

Ease of use
■ The interface is well designed and thoughtful, while a bevy of helpful tutorials gets you started

Quality of results
■ Creating professional quality sites has never been so easy and the option to edit styles is appreciated

Value for money
■ Overall, the price seems very reasonable for the sheer power and quality the package offers

SUMMARY

■ This version of Fusion is certainly worth a look. The only criticism is the difficulty experienced developers may face 'dumbing down' a level and coping with reduced flexibility. However, considering the full stack of features and good price, it's ideal for those making first strides online.

FINAL SCORE: 83%

NIKON COOLPIX 5400

WHETHER IT'S DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY FOR YOUR FAMILY SNAPS, HOME MOVIES OR WEB IMAGING, THIS ROBUST NEW UNIT COULD BE JUST THE TICKET

Nikon's Coolpix 5400 maintains a largely traditional appearance. At first glance, with its conventional camera shape, flash unit and wide telescopic lens you may question its modern day sensibilities. Couple with that its compact, gun metal exterior, and you'll begin to wonder just how it does what it says it does. However, the Quick Start Guide helps you discover its hidden talents, and removing the lens cap and flicking the Mode Selection wheel around gets you snap happy in no time, with a beginner's Auto setting doing much of the work for you.

As expected with cameras of this type, most of the framing of your subjects is done via a fold-out screen, but this one has a literal twist. The TFT LCD monitor neatly flips out and rotates to remain protected when not in use, while a standard optical viewfinder sits above. This enables you to more accurately frame your scene, and also means that the small but crisp display can be turned off to conserve power. On that front, the supplied rechargeable battery is expected to last just under two hours from full, so additional cells might be desirable.

Screen performance however, is on the whole very good and sharp in definition, while you'll find the dinky 1.5 inch scale more than adequate. Previewing your captures is also a joy, and the Preview mode cleverly lets you scan the memory card using thumbnails. This is to be expected, although the screen deserves praise for no loss of quality under direct sunlight. A possible niggle was the wait for photographs to be processed before switching

"WE TESTED THE CAMERA'S PERFORMANCE ON AUTO AND WERE NOT DISAPPOINTED WITH THE RESULTS, GETTING GREAT IMAGES BOTH INDOORS AND OUT"

Smooth operator

Aside from the automatic modes, there are those like Shutter, Aperture and Manual that will give the more accomplished photographers more power. Options for flash that include methods for avoiding red-eye are joined by advanced facilities for setting parameters such as white balance. These can all be called up and tweaked on the excellent onscreen menu, or in some cases directly from external buttons. For the most part we tested the camera's performance on Auto and were not disappointed with the results, getting great images both indoors and out. The flash did well to supplement the artificial light of the office, while daylight conditions yielded brilliantly crisp and vibrant shots.

What was noticeable was that the regular viewfinder proved far more reliable than the monitor. modes, but aspects such as zoom and focus remained strong. A feature that helps here is a Scene mode that optimises settings for certain types of shoots. Ranging from landscapes to fireworks displays, it proves a nice touch. Similarly, the camera's ability to shoot film and audio footage is a welcome addition that particularly excels at recording effective time lapse sequences. ■

SPECIFICATIONS

Product:	Nikon Coolpix 5400
Web address:	www.nikon.co.uk
Effective pixels:	5.1 million x 1/1.8 CCD
Recording format:	CompactFlash and Microdrive
Digital zoom:	4x
Lens data:	4x Zoom Nikkor, f/2.8-4.6
Shutter speed:	1-1/4,000
Connections:	AV, USB
Memory card	32Mb
Video compression:	Quick Time
Dimensions:	108 x 73 x 69mm
Weight:	320g

■ The Nikon Coolpix 5400 gives beautifully crisp and vibrant shots in daylight conditions, with stunning depth and colour

VERDICT

Product: Nikon Coolpix 5400
Price [inc VAT]: £649.99
Telephone: +44 (0)20 8481 6875
URL: www.nikon.co.uk

Features
■ Excellent Scene modes and the ability to record movies makes this suitable for Web apps and beyond

Ease of use
■ Auto mode gets you started instantly, while controls are easy to operate. Connection to PC is also a doddle

Quality of results
■ Outdoor and indoor pics look stunning in depth, colour and definition. Screen previews don't look bad either

Value for money
■ The hefty price is outweighed somewhat by the camera's ability, but could still deter many buyers

SUMMARY

■ Nikon has produced a camera that not only has sleek and retro looks, but is truly portable and powerful. The many modes, especially those for shooting specific scenes, will appeal, while facilities to capture film, take great close-ups and connect quickly to PC or Mac make this a serious contender.

FINAL SCORE: 87%

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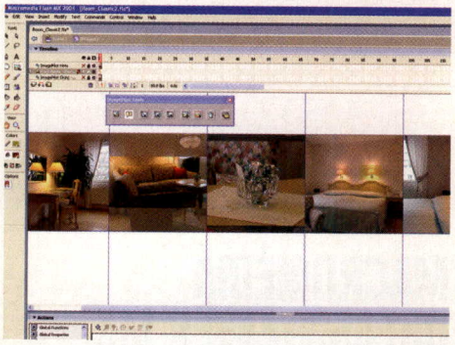
SCALADO IMAGEPILOT

CREATING INTERACTIVE IMAGE SLIDESHOWS JUST GOT EASIER WITH THIS INNOVATIVE NEW EXTENSION FOR FLASH MX

Internet shopping has always been a difficult problem for retailers. Traditional consumers prefer to be able to explore products in their own way before shelling out their hard-earned cash. Providing Web content that can facilitate this need is in fact not confined to just buying and selling. The benefits of applying such techniques to e-learning, marketing, not to mention support applications, are considerable.

Scalado's ImagePilot is a product that goes some way to offering the kind of functionality developers need to implement these types of solutions. Essentially an extension for use with Flash MX, it will produce high-resolution 2D presentations at a more rapid rate than using other more complex multimedia packages. ImagePilot objects can literally be generated in minutes for publishing in Flash format, whether inside existing projects or as independent SWF files.

The whole ImagePilot toolkit installs and integrates nicely into the Flash MX environment. A button is added to the main Tools pane, and as soon as you click it you see a further array of options on a floating bar. From then on, it is a case of inserting your saved picture files onto your movie scene by dragging open frames. Then, just as you might when creating image maps, it's left up to one of the hotspots to initiate the interactive elements. For example, letting visitors home in on a particular aspect of a product involves simply outlining the corresponding area. What's most impressive is that most of the effects can be performed using a single image, with the rotational zooms the most notable effects. All of these actions and views are basically movie clips added behind the scenes, so a Properties box for assigning names is required when attaching Action Scripts. That said even the most inexperienced user can attain brilliant results. ■



■ Setting up incredible interactive images is a doddle thanks to the features of Scalado's ImagePilot

VERDICT

Product: Scalado ImagePilot
Price [inc VAT]: $99 (£58 approx)
Telephone: +46 46 286 43 48
URL: www.scalado.com

Features
■ Comes bundled with all the tools you need to create unique slideshows in no time

Ease of use
■ Relies on a decent knowledge of Flash and scripting for using the APIs, but will go as far as you take it

Quality of results
■ Transforming static images into dynamic objects will energise your content and bring visitors back

Value for money
■ The potential for online sales could make it a bargain, but many may deem the price steep for an extension

SUMMARY

■ Flash MX 2004 is already a very powerful package, but clever extensions like this one only make it stronger. Home users looking to make fancy presentations will find this product as useful and exciting as those hoping to provide dynamic online catalogues. Flash expertise is required, though.

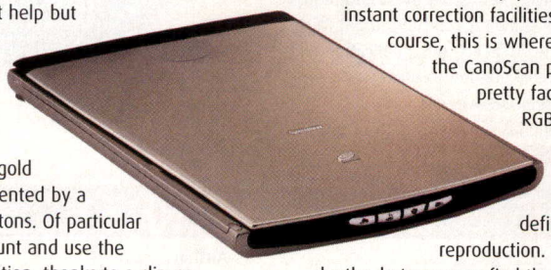
FINAL SCORE: 81%

CANON CANOSCAN LIDE 80

CAPTURE DOCUMENTS, PHOTOS AND FILMS WITH ONE OF THE SLEEKEST AND MOST STYLISH SCANNERS AROUND

Sampling real-world images and documents can unlock a whole host of applications and possibilities for designers without digicams. Canon's new CanoScan LiDE 80 is a perfect example of the market's most desirable flatbed models and features an impressive 2400x4800 dpi resolution.

However, the most striking aspect of this product is its extremely skinny dimensions. When you first take it from the box you can't help but marvel at its meagre 38mm-deep casing and the fabulous textured chrome lid. The whole build smacks of quality, while the silver-gold finish is neatly complemented by a selection of sculpted buttons. Of particular note is the ability to mount and use the scanner in a side-on position, thanks to a clip-on stand. This will impress those with limited desk space, while the primary port for hi-speed USB connection is accessibly situated.



Testing what this looker can do performance-wise is made very simple by the easy-to-follow Quick Start guide. Here you'll find straightforward instructions on first installing the software and drivers you require. With these you can not only configure device settings, such as the Quick Launch buttons and OCR options, but access recent files and even produce albums, slideshows or postcards. What's more, the bundle also comes with ArcSoft's PhotoStudio, which is not only used as the primary output for your scans but will even perform editing. Its many enhancement options and special effects are a joy to use and enable instant correction facilities for captures. Of course, this is where judgement lies and the CanoScan proved it isn't just a pretty face. The three-colour RGB light source manages to achieve admirable results that excel in definition and detail reproduction. You can set various depths, but you may find that simply choosing the best document type will more than suffice for most needs. Our test examples ranged from basic text sheets to matt photos and glossy magazine covers, each displaying high levels of clarity. It also proved to be a fast operator, even though the high-speed interface was wading through a standard port. ■

VERDICT

Product: Canon CanoScan LiDE 80
Price [inc VAT]: £139
Telephone: 08705 143 723
URL: www.canon.co.uk

Features
■ The unit has elegant new twists, while the supplied software is laden with useful tools and functionality

Ease of use
■ Once the software is installed, the plug-and-play USB connection gets a truly accessible experience underway

Quality of results
■ A range of documents are rendered with a quality that's more than adequate for consumer applications

Value for money
■ A great, sturdy build indicates thoughtful design, while added software puts the price tag firmly in perspective

SUMMARY

■ It would be easy for this well-finished and attractive scanner charm buyers on aesthetics alone, but it doesn't. The contemporary styling is backed up by a speedy performance that delivers great results. It's also refreshing to find a software bundle that you'll actually want to use.

FINAL SCORE: 88%

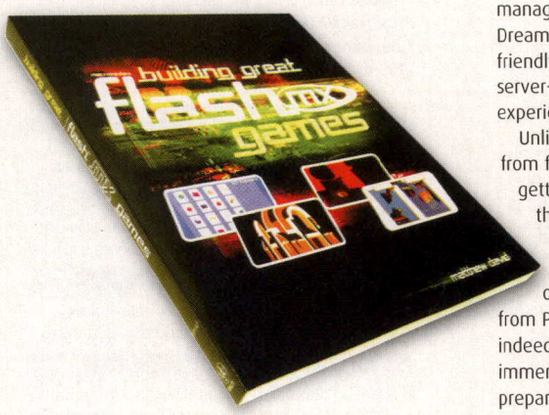
BOOK REVIEWS

THIS MONTH'S SELECTION OF PAPER HEAVYWEIGHTS INCLUDES BOOKS ON PHOTOSHOP, FLASH AND DREAMWEAVER. READ ON FOR OUR TIPS ON YOUR FURTHER READING

BUILDING GREAT FLASH MX GAMES

The Web is now about so much more than merely portraying information in an easily accessible manner. These days, sophisticated Web users have come to expect advanced interactive experiences from their favourite Web sites, and games are one of the best ways to ensure people leave your site with a smile on their face.

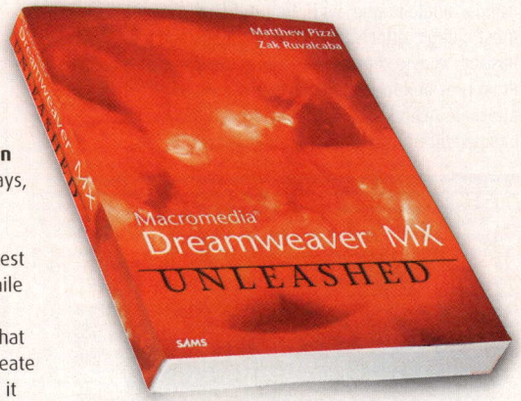
Building Great Flash MX Games does exactly what it promises on the cover – it shows you how to create amazing fully interactive games within Flash, and it does it in a way that shouldn't leave non-experts floundering for air. Author Matthew David, now one of *Practical Internet Web Designer's* esteemed panel of freelance writers, has split his book in two sections. The first shows you the 'tools of the trade', and talks you through various individual functions you'll need to master before you start gaming proper. Once you've got your sea legs, David plunges you into the deep stuff, showing you how to create many different types of games from scratch. If you don't believe us when we say that Matthew David knows his Flash gaming, check out our tutorial on page 62 to get a glimpse into what he can do. ■



VERDICT

Author: Matthew David
Price: £22.50
ISBN: 0-7645-1985-9
Publisher: Wiley
URL: www.wiley.com

FINAL SCORE: 88%



MACROMEDIA DREAMWEAVER MX UNLEASHED

Sometimes in life you need something weighty to satisfy your appetite for knowledge. *Dreamweaver MX Unleashed* should satiate even the most voracious of passions, thudding in at a whopping 1,000 pages. With such a huge canvas to play with, you won't be surprised to learn that Pizzi and Ruvalcaba's mighty tome manages to cover just about every facet of Dreamweaver site creation, ranging from beginner-friendly interface explanations through to advanced server-side discussions that would have all but experienced coders turning away in fright.

Unlike many similar products, this book shies away from fancy colour pages, and instead concentrates on getting the meat and potatoes right. This means that the authors are more than happy to talk you through the creation of Cascading Style Sheets in Dreamweaver, and you'll even find reams of example code showing you how to get more from Perl. As the name suggests, this publication will indeed give you the tools needed to unleash the immense power of Dreamweaver MX – just be prepared to get your hands dirty with a bit of oily code along the way. ■

VERDICT

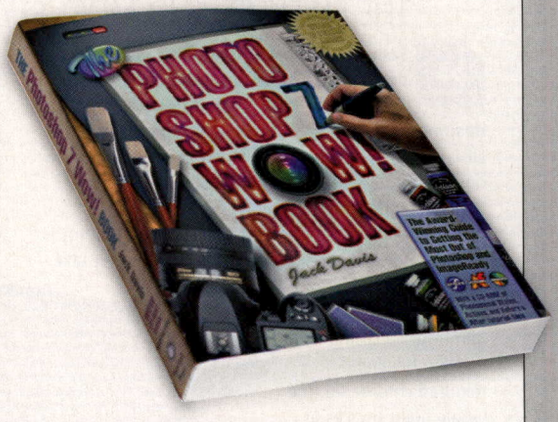
Author: Matthew Pizzi & Zak Ruvalcaba
Price: £36.50
ISBN: 0-672-32446-6
Publisher: SAMS
URL: www.samspublishing.com

FINAL SCORE: 84%

THE PHOTOSHOP 7 WOW! BOOK

Plastering the word 'wow' all over the cover of a book creates a sense of expectation that could all too easily disappear completely when the first page is opened. Thankfully, our tentative opening of *The Photoshop 7 Wow! Book* led to nothing but complete and utter admiration. Quite simply, the tutorials and tips on offer here are streets ahead of what you'd find in most books of this nature. Instead of starting with the basics and working his way up, author Jack Davis chooses to split this tome into easily recognisable sections, each of which contains its own selection of beginner-friendly and high-end techniques for you to learn.

The impressive thing about this publication isn't just the number of tools covered, but the incredible detail that Davis manages to cram into every chapter. The shelves are crammed with books offering to teach you the basics, but Davis shows you a wealth of tricks that will appeal to every level of user. Every image in the book is in full colour – and they need to be, to show off the impressive array of amazing techniques that Davis has written about. ■



VERDICT

Author: Jack Davis
Price: £37.99
ISBN: 0-321-12397-2
Publisher: Peachpit Press
URL: www.peachpit.com

FINAL SCORE: 90%

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- 24-Hour FTP-access
- Microsoft Access Databases
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TESTIMONIALS

S.Litherland

I have had some various experience with internet companies in regards to web hosting. Perfect Hosting is, as the name suggests. From the moment I was set up, instructions were clear and accurate and the website has been up and running since. The ftp service is fantastic and quick, and even when uploading with FrontPage, there are no errors which is more than I can say about other hosting services!!! Feedback is also equally as quick, again supplied with easy instructions for solutions. The service is professional and friendly and comes highly recommended. Many thanks again to Perfect Hosting, you've made website hosting easy!

S.Ryder

I cannot thank you all at Perfect Hosting enough for the help and support you gave to us in the hosting of our website. Your help no matter how small the problem is beyond compare. Perfect Hosting are a rare company that put the customer first, your professional but friendly approach meant I felt I could approach you over any problem no matter how small. Once again many thanks to you all for your help and continued support.

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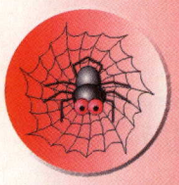

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HOW TO RUN YOUR DISC

Running the disc

The minimum recommended specification to run the *Practical Internet Web Designer* CD is 800 X 600 screen resolution, 32Mb RAM, 16-bit colour, Windows 95/98/Me, Intel Pentium or compatible P166. We recommend that all users shut down all other applications while running the CD.

The CD will autorun in Windows 95/98. For users without autorun enabled go to the Start menu, select RUN and then type d:\PracticalInternetWebDesigner.exe (replacing 'd' with your CD drive) and press 'Return'.

Licensing

Some software on the CD-ROM is shareware, which means that if you continue to use the program you should register it with the author. Freeware programs can be used free of charge. Trial versions of software are either time-limited (eg after 30 days they will stop working) or have some features disabled.

Damaged discs

If your CD has been snapped, scratched, corrupted or cracked, please return it to the address below for a free replacement:

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If you don't have a CD at all, call **01202 200200** and we'll send you one free of charge. You can also email **subs@paragon.co.uk**

Help!

If you encounter problems using the CD or installing the software you can email **cdhelp@paragon.co.uk**. Questions will be answered twice daily. Please provide us with as much information about the technical specifications of your machine and the software errors you are receiving as well as quoting the magazine and issue number in your email. Our helpdesk team take calls about disc installation problems on Wednesday afternoons between 2 and 6pm. Phone **01202 200259**.

CONTACT:

Tech Support:
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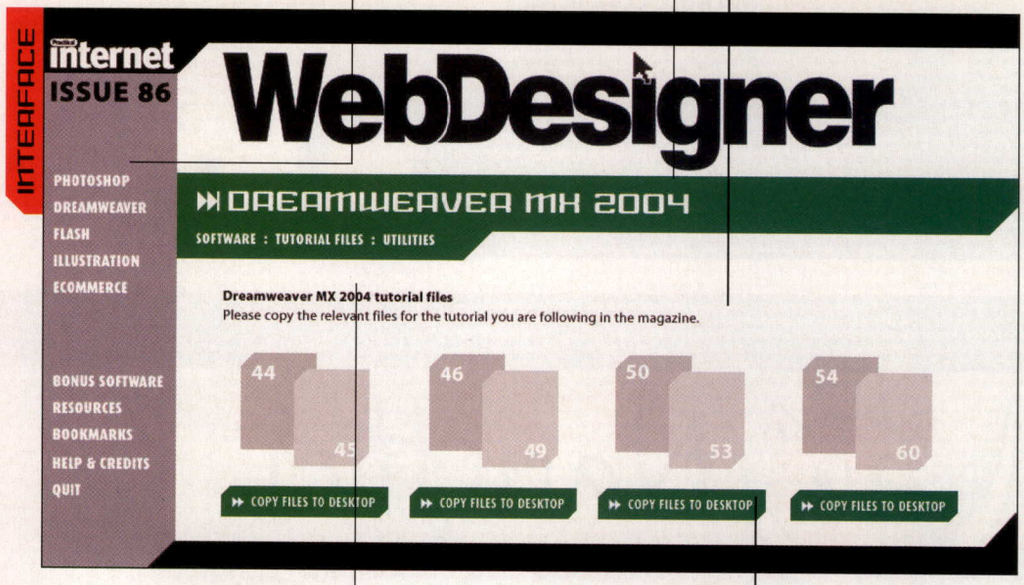
About the CD

Every issue, we scour the Net for the best programs and resources. Here's how your free CD shapes up this month...

Main navigation
Access the main sections of the CD from here

Section title
Each program has its own section for you to browse

Section title
Each program has its own section for you to browse



Section navigation
Click on the links to move through each section

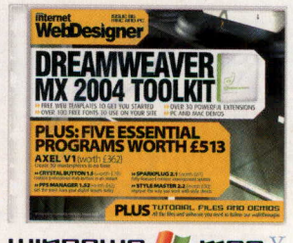
Content links
Here you'll find links to the files on the CD

How it works

Our aim with every issue's cover disc is to create the perfect complement to the issue itself. This means that navigating the CD should be as easy as reading the magazine, with each section designed to mimic a key area. While many CDs throw huge lists of software at you and expect you to find the programs you're interested in yourself, our CD is different. If you want a Dreamweaver extension, therefore, you'll find it in the Dreamweaver section – which also contains the software itself, as well as a host of other Dreamweaver-related utilities. Each section also contains tutorial files to help you better follow the walkthroughs on each of the key programs. Again, you'll find these essential files stored under each main program heading.

The reason for choosing this method of navigation is a simple one – we want to make your disc as intuitive and straightforward as possible. We hope you find the contents of the disc useful for developing your knowledge – that is the point after all!

The *Practical Internet Web Designer* CD is both PC and Mac friendly. We appreciate how many of you Flash users, for example, create your animations on an Apple machine, so we've tried to assemble a list of software as impressive as the PC section of the disc. What's more, for the first time ever, Mac users can navigate the disc through the same interface as the one on the PC side, making things much more intuitive.



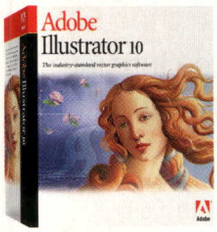
WINDOWS MAC X

ON THE DISC

Look for the logo

This logo appears on many of the tutorials to tell you that the files you need to follow the walkthrough appear on your disc. You'll also find a handy guide to finding the files.

ILLUSTRATOR 10

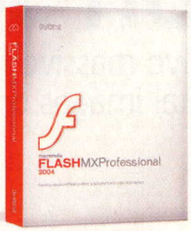


Specifications
Program: Illustrator 10
URL: www.adobe.com
Platforms: PC and Mac
Price: £381 (www.amazon.co.uk)
Upgrade Price: £144.99

Billed by Adobe as "the industry standard vector graphics software", Illustrator 10 is at the forefront of print and Web publishing. The series is already well-known for giving users the chance to create vibrant and dynamic artwork with an array of superb tools, but this latest version goes further. Graphic production for the Net has been given a new lease of life, thanks to the deployment of symbols. File sizes are kept low and streamlined due to the clever reduction in repeating elements. The package also comes with improved Flash support in the form of enhanced recognition of the SWF format. You can also look forward to a host of creative effects such as liquify tools, enveloping, warping and reflection, while new shape drawing facilities are notable. Developers will be particularly keen to hear that Illustrator now features support for scripting repetitive actions.

If you want to get accustomed to this great new software, you need look no further than our illustration techniques covered in this issue. Here you'll learn how to create exquisite logos and eye-catching sites within Illustrator. If that wasn't enough, you'll also find tips on using image maps within a program that lets its results speak for itself.

FLASH MX 2004



Specifications
Program: Flash MX 2004
URL: www.macromedia.com
Platforms: PC and Mac
Price: £419
Upgrade Price: £169

Fast establishing itself as the premier development software for Internet and new media design, Macromedia's Flash MX 2004 is a must. Virtually any site you come across these days features at least one Flash element, be it an animation or application, while many eschew HTML completely in favour of Flash's flexibility. Built around timeline events and its own ActionScript code, its movies can be employed as a means to produce breathtaking cartoons or even short films, or alternatively provide the tools to create intricate Web interfaces. You only need to check out our gallery section to be amazed by the ingenuity displayed by those who have mastered the software's potential, with the limit purely down to your imagination.

This month's tutorials should help you get underway, with a wide variety of applications put under the microscope. There's the first part of our long-running guide to developing a brilliantly retro Track n' Field game for starters. Then you'll experience what Flash can offer in terms of usability and style for your sites by building a Mac-inspired interface. You'll even find the package's use of motion tweening and symbols explained in our fantastic guide to building a *Matrix*-style animation.

THIS ISSUE'S FEATURED SOFTWARE

Every month, we try to bring you the software you need to follow the expert tutorials within the magazine. This issue, you'll find trials of Flash, Dreamweaver, Illustrator and osCommerce. What's more, the first three trials work on both Mac and PC, so Apple users can join in the fun

OSCOMMERCE

Specifications
Program: osCommerce
URL: www.oscommerce.com
Platforms: PC
Price: Free

Building an eCommerce Web site is a daunting prospect for even the most hardy of designers. You could code the entire thing yourself from the ground up, but that's likely to cause you more heartache than it's worth. This is why programs like osCommerce are an absolute must for anyone wishing to create impressive, fully-functional business Web sites. What's more, osCommerce is open source, which means that it's totally freeware.

The basic aim of osCommerce is simple – to help you build and maintain online stores with the minimum of effort. More importantly, though, it's one of the few free solutions available, so it's the perfect choice for anyone wishing to dip their toes into the murky eCommerce depths for the first time. And if you're still wondering if it's worth installing osCommerce, think about the 1,400 sites that are currently powered by the software.

osCommerce forms the basis for our massive 10-part business site tutorial series, where you'll learn how to create a professional eCommerce site to rival anything you see on the Net. We show you how to set it up in the first place, then tweak osCommerce's results to give your site a more personal look and feel.

DREAMWEAVER MX 2004

Specifications
Program: Dreamweaver MX 2004
URL: www.macromedia.com
Platforms: PC and Mac
Price: £339
Upgrade Price: £169

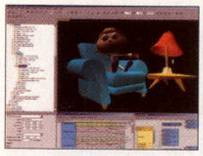
Macromedia's industry-leading Web-authoring environment is a firm favourite with professional designers and sets the standard for other packages. All the bases are covered, with an intuitive and tidy interface that is packed to the brim with powerful tools. You can get instant access to your HTML via the integrated editor, create and attach style sheets at the click of a button, or simply use the drag n' drop design view to achieve stunning results. Support for numerous plug-ins is provided, including embeddable objects for ActiveX controls and naturally Flash movies. You can also expand the built-in toolset by utilising the supplied Extension Manager to download new widgets from the Web.

What's more, you can get a head start at mastering some of the software's most impressive techniques with our selection of tutorials. Learn how to use Dreamweaver's facilities for implementing CSS, and observe the implications for maintaining a look across your site. You can also familiarise yourself with generating rapid image galleries, while an in-depth lesson in using templates for your pages could save valuable time and effort.

Full version software

This issue's CD comes packed with five massive full programs. Whether you want to create stunning 3D art or Web buttons, tweak your digital images or manage your site, you'll find something to suit here

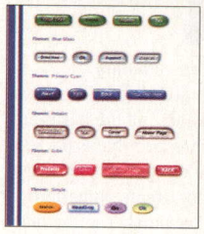
AXEL V1 [Full version worth £362]



Create art like this in minutes with AXEL V!

With a recommendation that compares it to Flash in 3D, AXEL can be considered one of the most powerful and affordable tool for creating interactive multimedia. Designed for use in Web, CD or DVD production, it allows you to add 2D or 3D graphics, video, text, sound, interaction and Flash animations without further tools or expertise. Your work can then be published and exported within many leading online file formats that range from QuickTime, VRML and Flash's SWF, to movie equivalents like MPEG-4. Covering professional applications such as those in architectural, educational, advertising or games circles, AXEL really is able to deliver astonishing results rapidly. Further high-end features include advanced wire-frame modelling with fully editable accurate curves and revolutions. Objects can also be given behaviours by scripting dynamic relations without the need for programming knowledge. You will also find that applying an assortment of rendering styles or skins can be achieved, including full motion Flash movies.

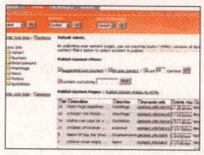
CRYSTAL BUTTON 1.5 [Full version worth £18]



Boost your Web site with the buttons here

If the thought of creating professional-looking Web buttons for your site has you reeling in horror, you'll be very pleased to hear that help is at hand. Crystal Button is a great application that enables you to produce excellent results in a matter of mere minutes. With an incredible variety of graphical effects you can simulate stunning 2D and 3D styles, coupled with textures that include glass, metal, plastic and even those themed for XP or Mac. It can also tackle the building of navigational bars and multilevel menus that will open up access to your site visitors. Similarly, the buttons you create can be set to respond to events in different ways, such as highlights or depression when flicked over with the cursor. In addition, all the necessary button properties are customisable and parameters such as text, size, shape, border and lighting can be altered in an instant. In short, this is the only tool you'll ever need to create professional buttons for your Web site.

SPARKPLUG 2.1 [Full version worth £61]

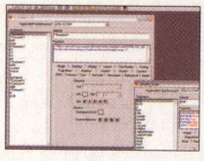


SparkPlug is an extremely effective Content Management System (CMS) for use with sites on the Macromedia ColdFusion platform. Database-driven and geared to cover multiple sites, its powerful set of features offers simple management of both static and dynamic domains. You don't need any knowledge of ColdFusion and developers only have to add pages, templates, images and content to get going. SparkPlug will then initiate rapid deployment by plugging in templates before attaching dynamic code and content, meaning that whole sites can be created or updated in no time. Customers can also be given permission to manipulate their own pages remotely, whereas administrators can oversee content via the personalised workspace.

PFS MANAGER 1.52 [Full version worth £42]

This program is essentially a digital photo database that gives users the opportunity to compile photo catalogues and effective online image galleries. Pictures can be comprehensively indexed and searched, while all the main file types like JPEG, GIF, PNG and TIFF are supported. Cleverly it can extract EXIF data directly from JPEGs and store this information within its records, along with specified information like camera, lens, location, subject and relevant notes. Importantly it will also generate full HTML representations of the image collection so your work is displayed as a Web gallery. Image data can be imported from a wide range of sources including hard disks, USB drives and scanners while a useful slideshow lets you preview images.

STYLE MASTER 2.2 [Full version worth £30]



If you're worried about Cascading Style Sheets, don't be. CSS can yield significant improvements to the way your site is managed and maintained, making a piece of software like Style Master a godsend. What the program does so well is provide a totally separate environment from your regular authoring tool, which is dedicated to working with style sheets. User friendly code editors put you right at the heart of attached classes and styles, with properties and selectors easily definable at the click of a button. There are also loads of wizards and tutorials that make the program instantly accessible to those users just starting out. Importantly, the integrated page previewing pane and linked browser support means that you can always keep an eye on visual changes made.

HOW TO FIND THE FULL PROGRAMS

To find the full programs on this issue's cover disc, simply click on the Bonus Software button on the main navigation bar. This will take you into the Software section, where you can find all of the full versions, as well as selected trials and demos for you to try

Full CD listing

With five full programs, some excellent trials and more tutorial files than you can shake a stick at, here's your full CD rundown

PC

Software

Anim-FX
AXEL V1
Crystal Button 1.5
Dreamweaver MX 2004
Flash MX 2004
Illustrator 10
Mix-FX
osCommerce
PFS Manager 1.52
Photoshop 7.0
SparkPlug 2.1
StyleMaster 2.2

Tutorial files

034-035 Photoshop layers
040-041 Photoshop blurs
042-043 Photoshop bevels
044-045 Dreamweaver gallery
044-045 Photoshop actions
046-049 Dreamweaver templates
050-053 Dreamweaver CSS
054-060 Dreamweaver Web site
062-067 Flash gaming
068-069 Flash Matrix effect
070-073 Flash dock bar
074-077 Illustrator logo
078-083 Illustrator site design

Resources

A4 Desk Suite
aenigma Fonts
David Miles Extensions
Dreamwarrior Extensions
EasyTemplates
Flevooware Extensions
Web Templates Zone
WebDesignHelper

MAC

Software

A4 Desk Suite
Dreamweaver MX 2004
Flash MX 2004
Illustrator 10

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070-073 Flash dock bar
074-077 Illustrator logo
078-083 Illustrator site design

Resources

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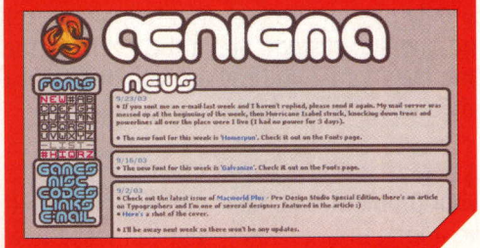
Flevooware
Web Templates Zone
WebDesignHelper

aenigma Fonts

Brian Kent's Aenigma site not only offers a superb selection of wild and wonderful typefaces, but also a host of fun stuff. There are screen savers and arcade games to download, while a selection of codes and cheats should help you out with several console titles. However, it's his fonts we're most keen on here and you'll soon understand why after viewing the selection provided on the cover disc. Each and every one of the 100+ fonts is highly usable and is sure to stamp individuality on either your documents or your Web sites. Of particular note are examples like the 3D Blox character set, while the fuzzy Dephunked and great Fatboy Slim designs offer trendy typing for a range of applications. They're all organised by name and can be previewed really easily, so check out aenigma.com for more of the same.



Essential Resources

David Miles Extensions
www.z3roadster.net/dreamweaver/

Having been responsible for writing a great selection of handy extensions, including those for adding dynamic HTML slideshows, David has kindly donated this collection to our disc. You'll find widgets for adding previous page links, mailto tags and a lot more.

A4 Desk Suite
www.a4desk.com

Based on Flash templates, this professional program offers all the power you'll need to generate fabulous menu headers, Web sites and multimedia presentations. Its no-nonsense interface provides access to a selection of wizards that means no coding experience is required.

Dreamwarrior
www.dmedia.net/dreamwarrior/

Compatible with Dreamweaver and Ultradev, this batch of 12 superb extensions covers a whole range of applications. You'll find a Meta tag generator, facilities for adding list boxes with country names and a variety of options for adding email links to name just a few.

Easy Templates
www.easytemplates.com

We're offering you a total of seven excellent Flash templates for your site from this great resources provider. Each has a fantastic and vibrant design that will give new life to your pages, while tailoring their appearance and content requires no expert knowledge.

FlevOOware
www.flevooware.nl/dreamweaver/

For some time now FlevOOware has been synonymous with the provision of Dreamweaver extensions. We've managed to secure five of the best examples for your use this issue, and recommend that you visit the great site to find even more of the same.

Web Templates Zone
www.webtemplateszone.com

Five unique Flash and HTML templates are yours courtesy of the people at Web Templates Zone. You'll find a whole range of bright, colourful themes to choose from, while the terrific site has even more amazing designs for you to enjoy.

Mix-FX
www.mix-fx.com

With the Mix-FX program, you can quickly produce animated buttons, banners, intros and text effects without the use of Flash. It also manages to pack in all the functionality you'll need to create hundreds of effective animations from a limitless combination of funky tools.

Anim-FX
www.anim-fx.com/

This trial version lets you preview a great Flash utility that enables you create brilliant banners, intros and text effects for your site. A compact tool, it uses 40 animations that you can customise within the incredibly intuitive and easy to use interface.

Web Design Helper
www.webdesignhelper.co.uk

Not only can you visit the resource-laden site that Web Design Helper provides, but you can also sample what it offers on our packed CD. Thirty polished and professionally-styled templates are included with all the code and graphics you need to get your own site started. The great thing about these templates is that they're such a doddle to use – you only have to open them up in Dreamweaver to start working on your site. From basic sites through to fully configured navigation bars and Flash files, you'll find this selection of templates the perfect tool to kickstart your Web designs – allowing you to build better Web pages than ever before.

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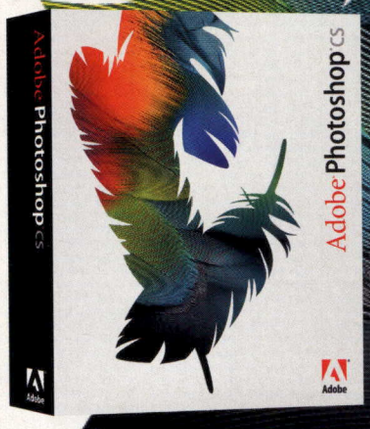
- Build sites with Photoshop: industry secrets revealed



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>Close

We just couldn't get enough of Per Gustafsson's amazing artwork in this month's gallery, so we thought we'd let you see one of his most impressive pieces in all its glory. This piece is actually a work in progress, and represents part of his 2003 collection of art. Enough of the talking – we'll let you enjoy the Modernstyle experience the way it was designed.

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Home account at a glance

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